

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT AND HIS •ELECTRIC• SEA-MOTOR; OR, THE SEARCH FOR A DRIFTING WRECK.

By "NONAME"



Before the Water Witch got within one hundred feet of the canoe, a huge black, armed with a war-club, sprang to his feet and raised his weapon. Whiz! went a shot from Jack's rifle.

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Jack Wright and His Electric Sea-Motor

OR,

The Search for a Drifting Wreck.

By "NONAME."

CHAPTER I.

HALF A MILLION DOLLARS.

On a bright sunny afternoon, in the month of September, not many years ago, an elegantly dressed boy, not yet of age was walking through the main street of a pretty fisher-village called Wrightstown.

It was built at the head of a bay on the coast of the great Atlantic, the shore being lined with fishermen's cottages, while the dwellings that set further back consisted of the usual collection of stores, private houses and public buildings common in such places.

This thriving place had been named after a celebrated inventor by the name of Bill Wright, who, when dying, left his only son, Jack, his inventive talent and a small amount of money as a heritage.

The boy since then had developed such wonderful ingenuity at inventing marvelous contrivances that he eventually made himself wealthy by the use he put them to.

He also became world famous, built himself a magnificent residence on the site of the old home, and there he dwelt, with two devoted friends, named Tim Topstay and Fritz Schneider, who had always accompanied him on his strange voyages.

In the huge workshop at the foot of the garden on the bank of the creek that run in from Wrightstown Bay, the boy spent all his leisure time, perfecting the many peculiar devices evolved from his fertile brain, and daily added laurels to his crown of fame.

On the morning referred to above, the boy had just arrived abreast of his house, when a tall, thin and very dark complexioned man, with a very heavy black moustache, dark hair and wearing an extremely stylish suit of clothes, and high hat, approached and accosted him with:

"Pardon me, senor, but can you tell me where a certain Jack Wright lives in this village? I have just come in on

the train from New York, and being a stranger here, I did not fully understand the direction given me."

"I can, sir," replied the boy demurely, "for I am Jack Wright myself."

"Compadre—you? Impossible!" ejaculated the stranger, who was evidently a Spaniard as a surprised look crossed his face, and he flashed a keen glance at the youth, sizing him up from head to foot.

He saw before him an athletic boy of medium size, with aquiline features, dark hair and eyes, and a frank, genial manner that was pleasant and agreeable.

"If you doubt it," said the boy smilingly, "ask any one passing by."

"You must excuse me, senor, I cannot doubt your assertion," politely replied the man, "but, carramba! I did not expect to find the world-renowned inventor of submarine boats, marvelous overland cycles, and wonderful airships, a mere boy."

"Do you wish to see me on business, sir?" asked Jack, still laughing.

"I do, indeed! and very important business, too, senor. Permit me to introduce myself. Here is my card, Juan Cordova, at your service."

Wondering what the Spaniard wanted, Jack glanced at the card handed to him, and saw that the man was connected with the office of the Spanish consulate in New York.

"If you will be kind enough to step into my house," said the boy, politely, "I shall be happy to hear what you have to say."

The stranger nodded, and preceded by the young inventor, passed into the handsome dwelling and entered a cozy library on the ground floor.

As soon as they were seated, the Spaniard said:

"Senor, you will no doubt be surprised at the object of my call when I inform you that I have been commissioned by a syndicate of gentlemen in New York City to make an effort to

purchase of one of the remarkable submarine boats of your invention, no matter what the cost may be."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Cordova," politely replied Jack, as he sized up the man. "I am not surprised at all for I have already been written to by the syndicate you mention, and I have politely, but very squarely refused to even talk of disposing of any of my inventions, for the reason that none of them are for sale."

"Ha! Then there has been treachery practiced upon me!" said Juan Cordova, emphasizing his remark by banging on the table with his hand, and a dark look of anger crossed his face.

"Indeed!" said Jack, elevating his eyebrows. "In that way?"

"Because the syndicate I mention is composed of myself and two others. One is too poor to purchase anything, and the other is enormously wealthy, and consequently must be the one who made you the offer. The poor man is named Davy Jones, and he was a sailor; the rich man is known as Simeon Crabb, and he is a speculator and backer of enterprises, very mean and very stingy."

"The letter I received," said Jack, "was signed by Simeon Crabb."

"Por Dios! Just as I suspected!" exclaimed Cordova vehemently.

"As we can do no business together, then," said Jack, arising. "our interview is at an end, I presume, Mr. Cordova?"

"On the contrary," replied the Spaniard in hasty tones, "since you will not sell one of your boats and I find that my associates have been deceiving me, it is my intention to make other plans with you, personally, leaving out Jones and Crabb."

"To what do you allude?" queried the boy.

"I am going to try and prevail upon you to enter the enterprise with me on shares, and as the profit at stake amounts to half a million dollars in Spanish gold, your gain, if we succeed, would recompense you for any trouble you are put to."

"Truly you offer me a grand inducement," said the boy, "but I am yet totally ignorant of what you have in view."

"Let me explain, then," said Cordova as he withdrew a packet of papers from his pocket. "A few years ago, as you are aware, there was a rebellion in the island of Cuba between the Cuban patriots and the Spanish government."

"I am well aware of the fact," replied Jack with a nod.

"Bueno! Well, señor, the Spanish frigate, La Paloma, at the close of the war, was laden with half a million dollars, to pay off the troops in Cuba, and some valuable papers in relation to the debt of the Colonial Bank, that were securities worth five times the amount of the gold to the crown of Spain."

"Well?" queried the boy, as Cordova paused.

"La Paloma left the port of Cadiz, Spain, with these valuables on board," proceeded the Spaniard, "and set sail for Cuba. But when she reached the neighborhood of Great Abaco Island, a sudden storm arose and she was wrecked. The frigate was dismantled and although provided with airtight compartments, she sunk to her scuppers and the seas made such breeches over her, the crew were obliged to take to the boats, abandoning her. She then drifted away in the gloom, her deck on a level with the sea, and her crew, with the exception of a few men that were lost, reached Abaco Island in safety. Since then, the money and papers have never been recovered and here is a newspaper account of the event, to prove what I have just told you, which I procured from a journal published at the time of the occurrence. Read it, señor, and see that I am not trifling."

He selected a paper from the packet he held, handed it to the boy, and when Jack had finished perusing it, he saw that the Spaniard had spoken the truth in every particular.

When he had finished the article, he handed it back to Cordova.

"Your story tallies in outline with the printed account," said Jack. "The only difference is that the paper goes more into detail and in giving a list of names of the officers and crew. I saw among the latter the name of the man Davy Jones you have mentioned."

"Precisely," replied Cordova. "And he was one of the crew, señor. That man recently came to me with Crabb, whom he met in New York, and to whom he told the story, and Crabb induced me to negotiate with the Spanish government about the matter. The result was that my government, after having vainly searched for La Paloma, abandoned all hope of ever regaining the treasure and the papers, and it was considered the frigate had sunk and carried its contents to the bottom of the sea. But Crabb, Jones and I knew that the frigate had not sunk yet."

"Ah!" said Jack, with newly aroused interest. "Go on."

"In my negotiations with the Spanish government I was told by the secretary of the Spanish navy that if I could recover the documents from La Paloma and return them to the crown of Spain, I could have the half million dollars in gold, if I could recover it also."

"That was a good offer, as you say you know the ship has not gone to the bottom," said Jack. "But what evidence have you got that the vessel is still afloat?"

"Plenty," replied Cordova, becoming excited as he went on with his recital. "This, señor, is no story of wild imagination. I have got solid facts to back every assertion I make. In the first place, here is the sworn affidavit of Davy Jones. In it he affirms that after the wreck, he made his way to Nassau, N. P., and there went into the service of the British governor, as captain of that gentleman's private yacht. One night they were cruising in the vicinity of Turk's Island, when they sighted a floating wreck, sunk to the scuppers. Approaching it, they saw that it was the wreck of the La Paloma. A hawser was made fast to it and they started to tow the wreck ashore, when a squall arose, rent the line, and while the yacht made for the harbor to escape the storm, the wreck drifted away, and was never seen by them again."

He handed a sworn affidavit of the above facts to Jack, who read the paper and saw that the British governor indorsed the statement.

"Your assertions are well verified," said Jack, handing the paper back.

"Next," said Cordova, "here is an affidavit of our syndicate procured recently from Captain Gomez, of the brig Dom Pedro, plying between Rio Janeiro and Boston. We learned the facts by reading a newspaper account of the statement. In it he says, last January, while his vessel was on the way north from Brazil, in a latitude that must be somewhere near the mouth of the Orinoco river, his vessel at mid-day collided with a floating wreck, which upon examination was seen to bear the name of La Paloma, and was seen to be the hulk of a Spanish man-of-war. It is evident to me, señor, that the air-chambers in the old wreck must still have been keeping her afloat, and the reason she was infrequently seen must have been because she was so deeply submerged. The captain of the Brazilian brig being ignorant of the value of the wreck, foolishly let it float away."

Jack also read this affirmation.

"This is excellent proof that your theory is right," said he.

"Very true, señor, but carramba! just listen to the third statement. Here is the last sworn document. It comes from the captain of the American whaling ship, Yankee Lass, which came into port last week. In it he affirms that while his ship, two months ago, was in the Pacific Ocean, passing Antipodes Island, one of the New Zealand group, they saw lying upon the shore, where it had evidently been cast by the waves,

the hulk of a Spanish frigate, covered with barnacles and sea weed and utterly dismantled, and with their glasses made out the name to be La Paloma!"

The boy also read this statement and said, smilingly:

"Then she is cast ashore at last, after all her drifting?"

"Yes, senor, if the waves have not yet set her adrift again."

"And you want the use of one of my boats to go after her treasure?"

"Exactly so, senor. Are you willing to venture such a cruise with me?"

"I will, Cordova, and I have built just the kind of boat we need."

CHAPTER II.

CORNERING THE SYNDICATE.

Jack's prompt agreement to engage in the search for the wreck thrilled the impetuous Spaniard like an electric shock, for he shook hands with the boy in a paroxysm of excitement, and declared in the most extravagant terms that their fortune was made.

In view of the substantial proof of the Spaniard's story, there was no room for Jack to doubt it, and the very fact of this opportunity for an ocean trip was pleasant to the boy, for he had recently completed a most marvelous new submarine boat.

A glance at the currents marked on a physical map of the sea, that hung upon the library wall, showed the young inventor plainly how the drifting wreck had been caught in the influence of the ocean's unchanging great currents, and had thus been carried about from one point to another.

A detailed conversation ensued between Jack and Cordova, in which the boy explained that his two friends, Tim and Fritz would accompany them and share in the profits if any were derived from the cruise in search of the wreck.

The Spaniard did not like the proposition at first, as he seemed to be of an avaricious nature, but when the boy explained that it would be impossible to work his boat without them, the man finally gave a reluctant consent to the plan.

Jack then told him to return in exactly one week, when he would have the boat in readiness to start on the cruise and learned that Cordova had left the consulate to work elsewhere.

"But how about your friends, Crabb and Jones?" Jack asked.

"El demonio!" hissed the man, with a scowl, as he recalled to his mind the treachery of his companions. "They schemed to get your boat between them and sneak off with me. Turn about is fair play, senor, and that is why I have thus agreed with you to go without them. Moreover, the Spanish government granted the license to me. Jones has no claim to the enterprise beyond giving the information I have mentioned, and all that Crabb had to do with it was to offer to back the attempt to get the gold by employing his money to buy a craft of you."

"Why would not an ordinary vessel have answered your purposes as well as mine?" asked Jack.

"I will tell you," answered the man. "If the sea washed the frigate ashore, it must have the power to drag it into the waves again. We have reasoned that as the place where she was beached was rocky, she may have a hole stove in her hull. Therefore if she was carried back into the sea, she would very likely sink to the bottom. It would then become necessary to dive for her, and there is nothing better qualified to do such a thing than your boat, that I know of."

Jack could not help admitting this forcible reasoning, and when the Spaniard took his departure the boy realized

that he had a shrewd, intelligent, treacherous and very far-seeing individual to deal with.

Elated over the prospect of so speedily finding use for his new invention, he resolved to go into his workshop, where he had left Tim and Fritz stowing the boat's new furniture on board, and apprised his friends of what he had just learned when he was startled by a terrific yell.

It came from the garden back of the library.

"Oh! Ouch!" screamed a shrill, nasal voice.

"Blast you old timbers!" interposed the gruff tones of the young inventor's friend Tim. "I'll keel haul ye fer tackin' around them ere port lights o' ther library, a-listenin' ter wot's a-goin' on aboard o' that house, yer flabbergasted ole baldheaded shrimp!"

The speaker was a retired man-of-war's man, who had fought for the Union in the navy with Jack's father, on board the frigate Wabash and could never get over his seafaring phrases.

"Tim has caught an eavesdropper prowling around the window," muttered Jack, opening a door and passing out upon a side piazza, from whence he had ingress to the garden.

Down on the walk stood the old sailor, clutching a little, thin, weazen-faced old man by the nape of the neck, while, with a wooden leg he had, he was kicking the aged fossil up and down the path.

Tim's short, squat figure was clad in seaman's garb, and his weather-beaten, red face, with only one eye, was fringed with a sandy beard; he had a huge quid of navy plug in his cheek, and his features, usually beaming with good nature, were now convulsed with rage.

He was an expert navigator and a rollicking, loyal friend to Jack, but he was, unfortunately, possessed of such a vivid imagination about his own exploits, that he was continually making up the most outrageous lies and springing them upon his friends.

As Jack glanced down at him, a little red monkey of the howling species, which Tim had once captured in Africa, came flying out the door, and reaching the old man, he flew at him with the most intense fury, rushed up his legs and body, reached the stranger's head, and fastening his hands in the man's hair, he set up a wild howl and began to tug out handful.

"Oh! Help! Take that monster away!" roared the old man in tones of horror, as he made frantic efforts to dislodge the monkey.

"Heave away, Whiskers!" yelled the sailor to his pet. "Take a reef in the lubber's figger-head and teach him not ter back up ter leeward o' people's houses again and meddle with their affairs."

The mischievous monkey proceeded to carry out its master's orders with the most fiendish delight, when Jack ran down into the garden and shouted to Tim:

"Say! Stop that! Call the monkey off, Tim, or you will kill the old rascal! Do you hear me? Stop it, I tell you!"

"Ay, ay, lad!" reluctantly replied Tim, complying. "But this ole pirate ain't no friend o' yours, 'cause I ran foul o' him a-squintin' in the library, a-listenin', a-shakin' his flipper at yer and the other gent as wuz in ther, an' sayin' he'd get the best o' yer, if yer started on that voyage."

A shadow of suspicion as to the old man's identity flashed across the boy's mind upon hearing this, and he sized the man up, as he recoiled from Tim and said sternly:

"See here, Simeon Crabb —"

"By gosh, he knows me," gasped the old fellow, turning pale.

"My suspicion is correct! Yes, I know you," said Jack.

"And I know all that passed between you and Cordova!" the old sharper hissed malevolently.

"Then you are aware of our intentions?" sneered Jack.

"It is well I suspected the Spaniard, and followed him, by golly!" shouted Crabb, furiously. "It's diamond cut diamond! But I will baffle you yet. If any one recovers that money it will be me. Do you understand? I have a steamer to get there ahead of you! If we meet, beware of me, Jack Wright!"

He shook his skinny fist at Jack, and wheeling around, he rushed out of the yard and disappeared.

"He is a spiteful old scoundrel!" exclaimed Jack angrily.

"Ay, now, an' he's as mad as blazes at yer, too," growled Tim as he picked Whiskers up in his arm and scratched the monkey's head.

"He has cause to be," grimly muttered Jack, and he thereupon told the sailor what had transpired.

Tim became enthusiastic over the project at once, for he loved the sea with a true sailor's instinct, and was anxious to get afloat again and see how Jack's new invention would work.

They then bent their steps towards the shop to give Fritz the news, when they heard the Dutch boy wildly yelling from within the building:

"Help! Ach Gott! Murder! Murder!"

"Good heavens!" gasped Jack with a violent start. "Fritz is in trouble."

He made a rush for the workshop, followed by the limping sailor, and reaching the door, he sent it crashing open and dashed in.

A thrilling scene met his view.

The big room contained a flooded cellar around which was a broad, iron platform, and upon this platform Jack saw Fritz lying upon his back, while a roughly-dressed, big man, with a red moustache, knelt upon him, and while clutching the Dutch boy by the throat and choking him with one hand, he pressed a revolver against Fritz's head with the other.

For an instant it seemed as if the stranger would kill the prostrate Dutch boy, but the noise of Jack's entrance startled the rascal, and diverted his attention and caused him to look around.

And before he could accomplish his purpose, Jack sprang at him, doubled up his fists, and ere the fellow could move a hand to defend himself, Jack dealt him a blow between the eyes that knocked him a yard away, uttering a yell of pain.

The next instant the young inventor sprang upon him, and wrenching the pistol from his hand, he pointed it at the stranger's face, and exclaimed thrillingly:

"Move an inch, you cur, and I will fire!"

"Don't shoot!" yelled the man bounding to his feet and crouching back against the wall in terror. "I ain't done nuthin!"

"Why did he attack you, Fritz?" asked the boy, ignoring the man's excuse.

"Shiminey Christmas!" roared the Dutch boy, "didn't yer seen him sneakin' by der shob and oxaminin' dot supmarine poat alretty?"

This was a grave offense for Jack's invention was not yet patented, and it was therefore necessary to keep it from the view of every one, so that no infringements could be made.

With a frown of annoyance, Jack pounced up on the rough-looking spy, grasped him by the collar and dragged him into the yard.

"Now, I want you to tell me what you was prowling around here for?" the boy exclaimed. "If you don't I will have you arrested."

"Talnt my fault," whined the man. "Sim Crabb did it. He wanted to know what sort of a craft your boat was. That's why he sent me here."

"Ah! You are a tool of that old villain, eh?" demanded Jack.

"No, I hain't. He and me is pardners!" flared the man.

"I understand. You are Davy Jones, ain't you?"

"Reckon I am. Who told you, cap?"

This wretch then was the third party of the Spaniard's syndicate.

It filled Jack with disgust for it was apparent to the boy now that all three were treacherous, unprincipled men, who were ready to resort to the meanest, underhanded methods in order to accomplish their nefarious purposes.

Jack did not bandy any more words with the man.

"I'll know you and your partner if ever it is my misfortune to meet you again!" he exclaimed. "I just kicked Crabb out of here, and now I am going to do the same with you."

And so saying Jack grasped the rascal by the neck and the seat of his pants, rushed him to the front gate and delivering him a parting kick, sent him flying into the street.

Davy Jones swore at him vehemently, but when he saw the pistol appear in Jack's hand, he traveled around the nearest corner at a 2:40 gait and disappeared from view.

"Thank heaven! I am well rid of those two wretches," exclaimed Jack as he retraced his steps. "But I've got a feeling in my mind that I haven't seen the last of them. They are spiteful, and Crabb may keep his threat, by going in quest of the treasure on the Spanish frigate ahead of me. Should he act at once, he may beat me and get the gold, for I've got to wait a week for Cordova's return, as I don't know where the Spaniard may be. Confound it! Why didn't I keep Cordova in Wrightstown?"

CHAPTER III.

THE ELECTRIC SEA-MOTOR.

Jack returned to the workshop where he found Tim and Fritz angrily discussing the movements of Crabb and Jones, for the old sailor had imparted the whole story to the Dutch boy.

Fritz was excited over the matter, for he was of a very fiery and combative temperament, and denounced the men in extravagant terms.

The Dutch boy was a fat little fellow, rigged in a costume such as he had worn in the fatherland, his age was slightly in excess of Jack's, he had a round, fat face, watery blue eyes, and a shock head of light hair.

He was an inveterate pipe smoker, an expert electrician, and played on the accordeon, but he was a daring, adventurous fellow, devoted to Jack and continually at variance with sailor.

"Vell," he roared, as the boy joined him. "Dit yer vhas kill him?"

"He won't never return and try to pry into my secrets again," the young inventor smilingly replied. "How did he happen to tackle you?"

"Donnervetter! He didn't vhas tackle me—id vhas me vot tackle him," said Fritz. "So soon dot I find him in by der shob, I vent for him, and I blug him in der ear. Den, vot you think—huh? He crap me by der necks, und ven he trow me over, dere he vos with dat pistol by mine head alretty."

"Has Tim told you about the Spaniard and his mission here?"

"Yah. Und I tink ve vhas petter go and found oursellus dot wrecks."

"Ay—al, lad, ther sooner ther better, too," chimed in

Tim. "That must be some truth in the matter or those lubbers wouldn't come up here from New York and acted that way."

"I have already decided to go as such a cruise will give me employment for the new boat," said Jack. "Have you both finished putting the furniture on the sea-motor? If you have, we will go aboard and take a run out on the bay to see how she operates."

"Everydings was retty," replied Fritz, "und I was yust finished puttin' dose batteries in order, so all we do is go apoard and start her up. I vos anxious dat I try her machineries minselluf."

"Then come aboard, boys, because we must be familiar with all her movements when we start for the treasure ship, as we may have to race a steam vessel which Crabb threatened to employ to go after the wreck. And as we can't start till a week from now, for the Spaniard won't be back till then, and Crabb may start to-morrow, our enemies will have nearly a week's start of us. If we expect to succeed, then, we will have to go like the wind in an effort to get ahead of the steamer."

There was a gang-plank from the platform to the boat which lay moored in the flooded cellar, and Jack and his friends crossed it and boarded the vessel.

She was a singular looking craft, one hundred feet long, with the name of Water Witch lettered in gilt on her hull.

It was shaped like a cigar with the top cut flat, and from the middle of the deck arose a piloting turret, with a deck-house forward, and another abaft of it, while there were railed decks fore and aft.

Abaft of the midship section there were two paddle wheels on each side, joined by shafts, beneath the stern was a propeller and rudder, and along the side a row of large flood-lights, in each of which there was an electric light and a powerful reflector, while on the under sides of the hull up forward there were two propellers to counteract rolling in a seaway on the surface.

The draught of the conical boat was one half of its twelve feet diameter when floating on the water's surface, which submerged the paddle wheels and brought the dead-lights on a level with the water.

She was made entirely of the finest tempered plates of Bessemer steel, riveted over a frame of the same material, built on a scale designed to resist an immense outward pressure.

There was a door and two windows on each side of the forward deck-house, two windows on each side of the after one, and a door leading out on the deck.

Jack and his friends entered the door on the port side, up forward, and found themselves in a finely furnished cabin, from which a staircase of polished mahogany led up into the pilot turret.

The latter circular compartment was handsomely appointed, and contained numerous maps, charts, nautical instruments, gauges, indicators, logs and meteorological instruments, a steering wheel, a series of levers for operating the machinery and a compass binnacle.

They passed through the turret and descending a stairway in back, entered a combined dining-room and kitchen, in back of which there was a beautiful state-room containing several bunks.

From the dining-room a flight of stairs led down into a large room aft, containing a ponderous machine for operating the boat, while the forward section was filled with a network of insulated copper wires, running around in all directions.

Some of them were connected with a large dynamo, which was worked by a small powerful oil engine; others joined a large number of helved accumulator jars for storing elec-

tricity, while some more grouped the electric lights, with which the boat was furnished, operated the air and water-pumps, that were placed in the bow, and the rest had various other functions.

A trap-door in the floor led into the hold from the machine room.

This place was divided into three sections.

The compartments fore and aft were air-reservoirs, while the central took in or expelled the sea water by means of an arrangement of tubes worked by the pumps.

When the boy wished to submerge the boat, the pumps forced the air into the end compartments, and let the water into the central chamber in a quantity heavy enough to overcome the buoyancy of the compressed air.

In order to arise surfaceward, the water was pumped out, the air allowed to expand in the water compartment, and the boat would arise to the surface like a bubble.

Having made a careful examination of everything to satisfy himself that it was in perfect order, the boy left Fritz down in the engine-room to watch the machinery, and went up to the pilot-house accompanied by Tim.

Jack instructed the sailor to cast off the gang-plank and hawsers, and Tim then summoned one of Jack's workmen, and had him open the two big doors that gave ingress to the creek.

When this was done the boy turned one of the levers, whereupon the paddle wheels began to revolve, and grasping the wheel, he steered the boat from the building into the stream.

Passing along the water course until she reached the bay, the boat soon shot out upon the sunlit waters, when Jack turned another lever, and shipping some water, sunk the craft to her dead-lights.

The moment the people on shore saw her they came flocking to the bay side from all directions, and cheer after cheer greeted the young inventor's marvel, in response to which Tim waved the stars and stripes from the deck.

It was not Jack's intention to give an exhibition of his boat, then, however, for he had more serious work to perform.

Side wheel boats were a new innovation with him, and he was anxious to get out into rough water where he could test the powers of the boat in a heavy seaway.

He therefore steered her straight for the opening in the headland, and when she passed the lighthouse on the point and dashed into the heaving Atlantic, she felt the heavy swell.

Jack then started the longitudinal screws up forward, and they at once counteracted the rolling motion given to the boat by her side wheels, the entire machine then working harmoniously.

There was a strong wind blowing against the rising tide which kicked up a choppy sea, the waves of which danced up around the deck and broke over the submerged bow in white foam.

As soon as Jack was satisfied that the sea-motor would run well upon an even keel, he turned on the full power of his battery.

Under a heavy pressure of amperes the Water Witch now dashed ahead and keeping his glance fastened upon the patent log, Jack saw that she easily ran a mile in the short space of two minutes.

Her speed met his expectations, and reversing the lever, he brought her to a pause inside her own length, and the reversed wheels then drove her backward as easily as she went ahead.

The boy then turned her, first in long curves, then in short ones, and after an hour's maneuvering he found that she was almost perfect in her actions, and easily detected where the errors were made.

He then shouted through a speaking tube down to Fritz in the engine-room, asking him various questions about the machinery, and the Dutch boy reported most everything in perfect order.

Tim then entered the deck-house and joined Jack.

"One day's work on her will serve to rectify all mistakes," said the young inventor. "She is perfectly satisfactory, Tim."

"A regular bird!" replied the sailor, enthusiastically.

"We have but one more trial to make," said the boy, "and if she is right in that particular, we will run back to the shop."

"Yer mean goin' down under the sea?"

"Exactly. Shut up all the doors and windows."

While Tim was obeying these requests, Jack apprised Fritz of what to do, and within a few moments everything was ready for the descent.

The boat was now perfectly water-tight.

Air was pumped into her and Jack let her drift.

The pumps compressed the air in the hold in their reservoirs, and the tubes were opened, when the sea was injected into the center chamber.

As the boat filled she gradually sunk under the sea, when the boy started the electric lights blazing all over the boat.

Every room was brilliantly illuminated and a broad sheen streaked from the dead-lights on each side, filling the pale green water with a bright mellow glow.

As the sea-motor sank lower the vitiated air was expelled by means of a valve in the roof of the turret, and automatic air injectors from the reservoirs kept the atmosphere for breathing supplied to them, while a mechanical spray of lime kept it purified.

In order to overcome the pressure heating the air, the boy had arranged a system of pipes circulating the sea-water through the boat.

They soon felt the difference between the confined atmosphere and the open air, but it occasioned them no inconvenience.

Outside of the heavy plate glass windows thousands of denizens of the deep came swarming curiously around the Water Witch, attracted by the glare of the electric radiators, and the boy turned a current into the search-light on the cabin roof of 80,000 candle power.

A piercing shaft of light shot out from it a long distance, and revealed floating objects with startling distinctness.

Down, down the sea-motor sunk, lower and lower, until the indicator showed a depth of sixty-four feet.

She continued to descend and the boy watched the indicator.

It soon reached a depth of 128 feet, and turning one of the levers, the young inventor shut off the influx of water, and started the wheels, sending her ahead.

She glided like a ghost through the dense water, which at that depth had assumed a brownish tint.

On she went until she attained full speed and made thirty knots an hour and Fritz reported everything all right below.

But these words had scarcely come up the tube when there came a sudden shock—a crash, and the boy and the old sailor were knocked to the floor half stunned.

A yell of horror pealed forth from Fritz and he came rushing up from below.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR LIFE OR DEATH.

"The Water Witch is a wreck! She struck a rock!"

It was Jack who uttered this alarming shout a few minutes later, when his senses revived, and he came to a realization of what had happened.

Unseen beneath the sea-motor, a jagged peak arising from the gloomy bed of the ocean had been lying directly in the way of the Water Witch, and her keel struck it about amidships on the port side.

"Ach Gott!" groaned Fritz. "Dere vhas a bick hole stofe in der baddery room, und der vater vhas pourin' in like shiminey alretty!"

"Then her ballast'll hold her down, and we'll never reach ther surface agin!" cried Tim, in tones of horror.

They heard a hoarse gurgling sound as the water poured into the compartment beneath them, and felt a most oppressive sensation as the influx of the sea compressed the air they were breathing.

As this feeling augmented every moment, the boy realized that they would die of asphyxiation if they did not get relief soon.

There was but one chance of saving the boat, and that was to empty her of the ballast she had first shipped to sink herself.

Realizing this, Jack at once turned on the pumps, and as soon as they began to relieve the Water Witch of her ballast, she stopped sinking as she had been doing under the additional weight of the water which was then pouring into her.

After the buoyancy of a submarine boat is overcome, it requires but little ballast to sink it, and very little lightening to raise it.

As the pumps on the Water Witch worked rapidly, and discharged large volumes of water, she soon began to raise herself.

But when she came within thirty feet of the surface, although all the water had been pumped from the central chamber, and the air was permitted to expand there, she failed to go any higher.

The amount of water that now filled the battery room held her weighed down to that depth; had the door been open leading into the engine-room, it would also have filled and sunk her twice the depth she then was.

Upon seeing that he could get the boat no higher, a look of deep disappointment crossed Jack's face, and he exclaimed:

"We've reached the limit!"

"Ay, lad, but we've got ter git ter ther top!" exclaimed Tim, wildly.

"Dis air vhas chokin' me!" gasped Fritz. "I don't couldt shtood it more longer as fife minutes, or I tink me I vhas shoke to det!"

"We must abandon the water Witch, then!" said Jack, reluctantly.

Jack arranged the machinery to the best advantage to keep the pumps working during their absence, and stopped the wheels working, so that the boat would not leave that spot till he recovered her.

"She won't sink any lower unless she ships more water," he remarked, "for the air confined in her reservoirs is bound to buoy her up."

"Oh, oh! Stop that! Let me be, blame you!" yelled a shrill, strange voice at this juncture, and a large green parrot flew into the turret from the saloon, pursued by Whiskers, the monkey.

This talkative bird belonged to Fritz, and was named Bismarck.

The fat boy had found it in Africa on a former trip there, and had educated it until it became a smart talker.

Bismarck and the monkey were sworn enemies, and hating each other cordially, they never lost an opportunity of fighting.

It made Tim feel bad to have to leave his pet on the wrecked sea-motor, but they could not take the bird and beast with them.

They scampered through the turret into the dining-room.

The three could not remain much longer pent up in the stifling compressed air of the Water Witch without suffering evil consequences.

Fritz and Tim stared blankly at each other.

A deathly silence prevailed for the space of a minute, for it seemed as if they were cut off from all possibility of escaping from the wreck with their lives.

Jack glanced at one of the registers.

It indicated a depth of thirty-one feet.

An idea then flashed across his mind, and turning to his friends he said in cool, collected tones:

"Don't give away to despair. We have yet one chance left. It is a desperate venture, but there is no alternative unless you wish to perish here, and I mean to risk it."

"Vot ve can do?" eagerly asked Fritz, brightening up a little.

"One of us must leave the boat and procure help. Two must remain, and run chances of living in this compressed air for the space of an hour longer. This, I think, can be done if I open the escape valve, and exhaust some of the air in the water."

"Veil?" asked Fritz, as he paused.

"We must be pretty close to the coast. The one who ventures out, if he reaches the surface alive, must swim ashore and get a boat, and rescue the ones who are left aboard here."

"Ay, that's ther only way," assented Tim gloomily.

"Vitch vun will leaf der poat?" asked the Dutch boy.

"We will decide that by a ballot," gravely answered Jack. "I'll take three pieces of paper, have two without a mark, and one with the word 'Go,' written on it, fold them, put them in my hat, and you can take your choice. The one who gets the marked paper must leave the boat. Will that do?"

The others agreed, and he arranged the three ballots.

Fritz drew the first, Tim the second, and Jack took the remaining one.

It was then found that the young inventor drew the marked paper.

Perhaps it were better so, as Tim could not manage well with his wooden leg, and Fritz was too fat to be active.

The boy's preparations were soon made, for all he did was to divest himself of everything but his pants and shirt, put on a cork life-preserver to hasten his ascent to the surface, and let some of the confined air out, to relieve his friends.

He then shook hands with them, and giving them a few parting instructions, he went down through the engine-room into the hold, which was now emptied of the water.

Turning on an electric light, he saw that the boat was lying with her bow sunk lower than the stern by the weight of the water that held her down.

If he had the means of connecting a pump with the battery room, he might have emptied the boat of the water, and kept her at the surface long enough to get her ashore; but as he could not do that it was necessary to follow his present course.

Nor could the three have left the sea-motor together as he was going to do, without running the risk of drowning in the venture, for his work was ten times more hazardous than remaining on board, for he had modified the pressure of the confined atmosphere so that Tim and Fritz were now able to breathe with more freedom.

At one side of the hold there was a closet-like compartment, with a water-tight door, and he passed into it and closed the door after him.

This chamber gave access to a door in the bottom side of the hull.

It was fastened with a latch.

Jack drew a deep breath, lifted the latch, the door opened, and the sea water rushed in, flooding the compartment.

Out into the sea dove the plucky boy as quick as a flash, for he did not expect to be able to hold his breath much longer

than a minute, and in that limited space of time he had a good ways to go in order to reach the surface.

He was an expert swimmer, and was nerved up to his work by the desperation of their critical situation, so that he had not the remotest fear of the hazardous venture he was taking.

Like a fish his active body clove the water, and then by the action of his hands and the buoyancy of the life-preserver he wore he began to dart upward.

He only arose a few feet, however, when his head struck the driving-rod connecting the two paddle wheels.

The shock made him see stars.

But what was his horror the next moment to feel himself get jammed in between the driving rod and the hull of the boat.

There was just wide enough space there to hold him wedged in.

To remain meant drowning, for he must soon breathe.

A thrill of horror pervaded him for an instant, but he knew it were rash to lose his presence of mind now, and fighting off the feeling of alarm that took possession of him, he resolutely began to struggle in order to drag himself from his uncomfortable position.

The metal rod seemed to hold him with the tenacity of a vise, and the seconds that slipped by seemed like so many hours to him.

But he finally succeeded in wrenching his body free, and with a feeling of intense relief, felt himself darting surface-ward again.

Up, up, shot his body, but the unfortunate accident had kept him working over half a minute, his exertions had exhausted him, and an intolerable desire to breathe began to take possession of him.

It seemed as if he could hold in no longer.

A strange sensation seized him.

All his power of reasoning vanished and left him a poor, helpless object without sense enough to save himself. For all his actions now retarded his ascent to the surface.

His head felt as if it were swelling up and ready to burst. There sounded a thunderous booming in his ears, myriads of bright sparks seemed to flash before his bulging eyes, and a dreamy lethargy crept over his mind.

It lent him a sensation of floating in the air, and yet this delicious languor was the grim precursor of death.

The feeling did not last long, for there came a sudden melting away of all thoughts, everything became jumbled in confused chaos, and then all became a dark blank.

Jack's senses had fled.

In this condition his body then shot up to the surface of the choppy sea, and the life-preserver under his arms held him floating in an upright position in the sunlight.

But he was utterly unconscious.

Fathoms down in the deep below him shone the faint glimmer of the lights of the sunken wreck, in which his unfortunate friends were praying for him to hasten his movements to help to rescue them from death.

But poor Jack was then beyond the ability of doing anything for them.

CHAPTER V.

MAKING USE OF YOUR ENEMY.

"Ther boy is drowneded, Mr. Crabb, an' no mistake about it."

"Pull him up on the deck, Davy Jones, anyway."

A large and handsome steam yacht, named the Spider Crab, had just come out of Wrightstown Bay with its owner, Simeon Crabb, and his lieutenant, Davy Jones, on the forward deck, when Jack's body was discovered floating in the water, and the boat ran up to the boy.

Davy Jones had fastened the boat-hook in the waistband of the young inventor's trousers, and now hauled the boy up on deck, when the two rascals suddenly recognized Jack.

Their amazement was intense.

"Why, confound it," gasped Crabb, "it's that boy, Jack Wright, by golly!"

"Lordy, now so it is," coincided the sailor, scowling at the boy.

"Heave him over again, Davy—we want nothing to do with him!"

"That I will, sir, with pleasure," growled the sailor, savagely. "We both owes him one for wot he done to us, an' don't love him much."

He was just about to hurl Jack into the sea when the captain of the steam yacht bounded forward and stopped him.

"Hold!" he shouted sternly. "The boy is yet alive!"

"I don't keer if he is!" growled Davy Jones spitefully.

"What! Would you murder this poor waif of the sea?"

"You mind your business!" snapped Simeon Crabb, slowly. "The boy is dead. Heave him overboard, Jones—do you hear me?"

"I tell you he is yet alive and returning to his senses!" hotly persisted the captain. "I won't allow you to murder him, for I understand by your talk that he is your enemy, and you——"

"Shut up!" cried the old man, authoritatively. "I own this boat!"

"And I am captain of it!" retorted the officer. "As commanding officer of the yacht I forbid this outrage. If you commit the crime I shall have you arrested upon our return to port!"

"By jingo!" yelled Crabb, in a paroxysm of rage, "you are taking a great deal upon yourself, trying to dictate to me, and making such threats! When we get back to New York I shall discharge you, sir. I'll get a new captain—I'll get a new crew—I'll get men who will do my bidding without objection. I need such a crew for my trip to the Pacific, and I'll have it, too!"

He shook his skinny fist at the captain and glared balefully at Jack, upon whom two of the sailors were operating to bring him to his senses, under the captain's instructions.

The boy discharged the brine from his stomach, and under the stimulus of some liquor he recovered his senses.

Upon arising and discovering where he was, a look of intense amazement crossed his face, and he said to the captain:

"It seems to me I've been snatched from the very jaws of death, sir."

"Ay, now, so you was," assented the officer. "We found you half drowned a few minutes ago, and those gentlemen, one of whom owns this yacht was going to heave you overboard, saying you was dead."

The captain pointed at Crabb and Jones, and the moment Jack recognized them he gave a start of surprise and cried:

"What! Is this craft owned by that old villain?"

"I am led to presume that you and my employer are enemies."

"So we are, but the bad feeling really all arose on his side, captain."

His wrinkled face contorted with rage, Crabb now approached, and in a voice that was hoarse with rage, he yelled:

"I want that boy put off my yacht at once!"

"We will run into Wrightstown wharf presently, sir," coldly answered the captain.

"No, you won't. I forbid it. Let the beggar swim ashore!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind," bluntly replied the captain.

"Remember, I'm going to discharge you for this!"

"I don't care if you do."

"By heavens, I am not even master on board my own ship!"

"You are as much as you ever will be."

"Do you intend to put that boy off here or not?"

"No!"

"Then I shall!"

As Crabb said this, he fumbled in his hip pocket, and presently withdrew a revolver, which he cocked and pointed at Jack.

"Now go!" he hissed spitefully, "or I'll put a ball in you!"

"Disarm that madman, boys!" roared the captain to his sailors.

Several of them surrounded the infuriated man to obey, when Jones rushed to Crabb's assistance, and a desperate struggle ensued.

Overwhelmed by superior numbers, the yacht owner and his friend were disarmed, hustled into a cabin and locked in a stateroom.

The captain then turned to Jack with a look of disgust on his face.

"He's a wicked old rascal," he remarked, "and I and my crew will not be sorry to leave his employ when we return to New York. He said he was going to start for Antipodes Island in the Pacific to-morrow, but even had this dirty piece of business not occurred, I would not have gone with him, he is such a mean-minded man."

"Ah! He was to start to-morrow, eh?" ejaculated the boy, in surprise.

"Did you know anything about the matter?"

"Everything. There would have been a race there between this yacht and my own boat, but unfortunately she lies wrecked thirty feet below us, and two of my friends are yet aboard in peril of their lives."

"They must be dead, then."

"No, they are alive, but will perish if I don't rescue them at once."

"How could they live under water?"

"Because my craft is a submarine boat," replied Jack, and he then explained to the captain what had happened.

When his story was finished the officer said, in eager tones:

"Perhaps we can raise your craft, Mr. Wright. This yacht is furnished with diving apparatus, and if you will go down to your vessel and make a hawser fast to her we can fix the line to our engine and raise your sea-motor to the surface."

A thrill of joy passed over the boy, and he eagerly assented, whereupon a diver's suit, ropes, tubing, and an air-pump were brought up on deck.

Jack put on the suit, it was joined to the pump by the hose, a life-line was fastened to him, and taking a heavy hawser, with a hook in the end, the boy prepared to descend.

The yacht was sent around until the dull glowing lights on the submerged sea-motor were located, and as it passed over them Jack descended.

Down he went through the brine, two men working the pump on deck that supplied him with air, until he finally reached the Water Witch and alighted on the cabin roof.

He eagerly peered into the pilot-house, and saw Tim and Fritz lying upon the floor perfectly motionless and as pale as death.

A terrible fear assailed the boy that they no longer were living, and he hastily descended to the forward deck, made the line fast to a stanchion, and signaled to be hauled up.

When he reached the surface and got on the deck of the yacht he opened the visor of his helmet and told the men to start the engine.

It was not much trouble to raise the Water Witch, and by the time she reached the surface the boy was divested of the diving suit.

The moment her bow was lifted from the water by the hawser Jack went aboard, opened the cabin door, and rushed

into the stifling atmosphere his two friends had been forced to breathe.

Upon reaching the turret he flung open a window, and allowed the pure air to freely circulate in the round room.

A closer examination showed him that Tim and Fritz were yet alive, but were senseless from having been overcome by the oppressive air in the sea-motor.

Jack worked over them for some time before he could revive them, but once started on the road to recovery they quickly rallied, regained their senses, and finally were themselves again.

In a few words the young inventor explained what befell them, and they then went aboard the Spider Crab, where the good-hearted captain told them he would tow the Water Witch into the bay for them.

Accordingly this was done, and the submarine boat was then towed up the creek to the workshop, and Jack's laborers brought her inside the spacious building.

Thanking the captain and crew of the Spider Crab for the invaluable services they rendered, Jack and his friends then went ashore, and the steam yacht took its departure.

It had been a disastrous trial trip of the sea-motor, and might have terminated more fatally had not the most marvelous good luck attended them throughout the adventure.

The workmen raised the sea-motor from the water in the afternoon, and when Jack made an examination of the damage he found that a huge, ragged hole had been stove through one of the plates; but the injury could be repaired at the expense of some labor.

Some new plates were ordered at once, and as they were ready on the following day, Jack and his friends set to work repairing the damage, and finished the job by nightfall.

"It was singular," said the young inventor that night, as they put on their hats to return to the house, "but Simeon Crabb not only saved my life, much as he wanted to kill me afterward, but he had to submit to his men saving yours, and his yacht being employed to raise my boat and bring it home for me."

"Ay, now," replied Tim, with a grin, as he took a huge chew of navy plug, and gave a hitch at his pants; "an' mad enough ther bald-headed ole pirate must a-been about it too. It reminds me o' the ole frigate Wabash durin' ther war——"

"Shesn'ts!" interposed Fritz, with a look of supreme disgust.

"Belay thar!" roared the old sailor, glaring balefully at the fat boy with his good eye. "I d'want no interruptions, yer lubber, when I'm a-spinnin' my yarns. Yer see, Jack, it happened this way: One night two o' ther enemy's ships wuz lyin' a cable's length apart off Port Royal, an' I wuz at ther wheel. I seed 'em watchin' us, an' I steered the ole frigate as if ter run atween 'em. On we scudded at a twelve knot pace, but just as I got our bowsprit in ther openin', aroun' I spun ther wheel, veerin' off ter ther wind'ard. Soon as we wuz there they fired! But blast my timbers if they didn't pound each other instid, an' thar ships wuz blowed ter pieces an' sunk wi' all hands aboard. Waal, sir, I tacked off ter leeward, an' workin' ther Wabash athwart ther st'arn o' ther other wessel, ther guns wuz made ready fer a broadside, an'——"

"What other vessel?" asked Jack, sharply.

"Why, lad, ther one wot fired at the other."

"But you said there were only two, and they blowed each other to pieces."

"Did I?" asked Tim, sheepishly, as he scratched his nose and thought of it.

"The trouble with most liars is that they are bound to contradict themselves sooner or later," muttered Jack, leaving the shop.

Tim said no more about his prowess, but followed the boy to the house.

Jack found two letters awaiting him in his library.

One was his patent for the Water Witch, and the other from the Spaniard, Juan Cordova, and was couched in the following terms:

"Mr. Jack Wright.—It is imperative that we start as soon as we can for Antipodes Island. Simeon Crabb has purchased a big steam yacht called the Spider Crab. She came to New York to-day. He discharged his crew and has manned her with a gang of lawless ruffians. He has also equipped her with provisions for a long voyage, and armed her with weapons enough to supply a man-of-war. I have had him closely watched by a detective, and learned that his vessel will sail to-morrow morning, and Davy Jones will accompany him as his captain. Expect me at Wrightstown by an early train with full particulars.

"Yours truly,

Juan Cordova."

Jack read this letter to his friends and then said in serious tones:

"We cannot get ready to depart by to-morrow, boys, and Crabb will have a good start ahead of us. But a long chase is a stern chase, and if we don't beat him and gain the treasure, it will be mighty queer."

CHAPTER VI.

STARTING FOR ANTIPODES ISLAND.

On the following morning Cordova arrived in Wrightstown.

He was an excitable individual and smoked cigarettes continually, gave Jack the details of all he learned, and was cast into a fever of apprehension when he found that it would be impossible for the sea-motor to be stored for the trip until the following day.

"Carramba!" he cried impatiently. "Crabb will then have twenty-four hours the start of us. We will never catch him. He will reach the island ahead of us. It is useless to start."

"Don't you alarm yourself," reassured Jack quietly. "He won't beat us, Cordova. The sea-motor is a fast boat, and will soon overhaul him. Cool off—cool off, man!"

"Ah, but the steam yacht he has purchased is one of the biggest and fastest to be procured, compadre!" cried Cordova, puffing a big cloud of smoke in the air as he paced up and down the library with quick, restless movements.

"I don't care if she could beat the fleetest yacht afloat," replied Jack. "My boat could travel faster than his anyway. I've been aboard the Spider Crab and seen what she is."

"You have?" gasped the Spaniard, pausing in front of Jack and gazing at him in surprise. "Whereabouts?"

"In Wrightstown Bay," replied the boy.

He then told Cordova what happened to him, arousing the man's astonishment to the highest degree.

"Por mi madre!" he cried emphatically, when Jack's recital was finished. "You have had a rough and lasting experience, senior. You can now understand what you have to contend with."

"And it doesn't frighten me in the least!" said Jack, carelessly.

The sea-motor's supplies had been ordered from New York, as the boy could not get everything he wanted in Wrightstown, and they came in on a night train.

It was so late before they were stowed aboard of the Water Witch and everything put in ship-shape order that our friends were glad to turn in to rest after their tiresome work.

On the following morning the four embarked, however, with Bismarck and Whiskers, and the boy started his boat.

The sun was just rising over the heaving sea as the Water Witch dashed out on the Atlantic, and headed southward, and there was every indication of it being a hot day.

Few vessels were to be seen on the hazy water, and they soon left Wrightstown many miles behind them.

Tim and Fritz remained below watching the batteries and the machinery, to see that they worked properly, and the Spaniard remained in the pilot-house with Jack.

"You expressed a fear that we could not make better time than the Spider Crab," said the boy with a smile, "but I'm going to show you that it was ungrounded, Cordova."

"How do you mean, senor?" queried the man.

"Do you see that register marked 'Speed,' on the wall there?"

"Plainly. The needle points now at the number fifteen."

"That indicates that we are going fifteen knots an hour."

"Indeed! Why do you call my attention to it?"

"To show you that we are now traveling at a rate which is seldom exceeded by fast ocean steamers. Keep your glance upon the needle, and I'll show you how fast I intend to run the sea-motor for the next twenty-four hours."

Cordova nodded, and Jack turned one of the levers around to a notch marked with the letter D.

The Water Witch now increased her speed until the paddle wheels made over one thousand revolutions a minute, and the needle in the indicator watched by Cordova swung around gradually.

It finally rested on the number 40 and paused there.

The sea-motor was now fairly humming through the water, a jet of spray flying up at her bow, the wheels leaving an undulating foamy swell behind in her wake, and the Spaniard turned to Jack with a grim, astonished expression.

"Forty miles an hour, por Dios!" he said, in a hissing whisper.

"Exactly so," assented the boy, with a nod and a smile. "I calculate that the Spider Crab will not make more than fifteen. In twenty-four hours at that rate she would make 360 miles, while we would travel 960, a difference of 600 miles more. Consequently, in about one-third of a day we are likely to over-haul the Spider Crab. It is now six o'clock. I predict that by two this afternoon we will sight Simeon Crabb's steam yacht."

"Barring accidents, senor."

"Of course."

"Can the Water Witch keep up such high speed?"

"A month without stopping if necessary."

Cordova's face brightened up at this cheering news, and he went off into a torrent of praise for the noble sea-motor.

Tim and Fritz came on deck in the course of an hour, and reported that everything was working favorably in the engine and battery rooms, and said she did not leak a drop where they had repaired her.

New York harbor was passed, and then they ran down along the Highlands and by noontime passed Cape Hatteras.

Fritz prepared them an excellent dinner.

The young inventor resumed control of his boat when the meal was concluded, and they overhauled a coasting schooner.

Every one of the indolent crew of the vessel rushed to the rail, to obtain a view of the singular looking sea-motor.

"Ship ahoy!" hailed the puzzled captain of the vessel.

"Ahoy!" answered Jack, laughing at the surprised look of the men.

"What craft is that?" curiously asked the captain.

"Mine!" evasively replied Jack, with a broader grin.

"Ay, but what I want to know is what sort o' ship she is?"

"Metal," replied the boy, briefly.

"Confound it, don't you understand, I want to know what works her?"

"Machinery," was the boy's answer.

The ungratified curiosity of the skipper angered him.

His face grew as dark as a thundercloud, and he shook his fist at Jack.

"You blamed fool," he roared in exasperated tones, "is she a new style steamer?"

"No," sang out the young inventor, coolly.

And leaving the infuriated skipper swearing and raving, and as blissfully ignorant about the sea-motor as he was before, Jack sent the Water Witch flying ahead, the schooner soon being left hull down astern.

Jack presently made a tour of inspection of the boat himself, leaving Tim to navigate her, and was satisfied with everything.

He was soon recalled on deck by hearing Fritz shout :

"Sail—ho! Sail—ho!"

"Where away?" shouted the boy, hurrying up on deck.

"Athwart our course, dead ahead," answered the fat boy.

Jack discerned a white suit of sails and a stream of black smoke, procured his binocular and leveled it at the vessel.

She was about seven miles ahead and the glass showed her to be a very handsome steamer, pursuing the course Jack was on.

Upon a nearer approach, the boy viewed her again.

This time he made out the name as Spider Crab and recognized her as his enemy's craft.

When he imparted this information to the rest, a thrill passed over them, and Cordova glanced at his gold watch.

"Just two o'clock!" he exclaimed. "You are a true prophet, Wright."

"We will reach her in a few minutes," laughed Jack.

"Shall I steer for her, lad?" queried Tim.

"As close as you like—I'll hail old Crabb."

"Lordy, how mad he'll be to see us!" chuckled Tim.

On dashed the submarine boat, and in a short time she arrived within fifty yards of the Spider Crab before she was noticed.

The lookout reported her, and Davy Jones and those of his crew who were on deck swarmed to the side, clad in new blue uniforms.

Jack saw that the crew of the big steam yacht were a ruffianly-looking gang, and observed that the Spider Crab was armed with four good sized brass guns on each quarter.

"They mean business now, and no mistake," he muttered to himself.

Just then Davy Jones hailed the young inventor and the old rascal who owned the yacht came up from the cabin.

"Where are you bound for?" roared Jones, sourly.

"Antipodes Island, in quest of the treasure of La Paloma," replied Jack. "You had a start of one day ahead of us and yet we overhauled you, as you can see!"

"By golly, he's got his submarine boat, too," growled Simeon Crabb.

"Ye'd best turn back now—see!" shouted Davy Jones. "Yer crossin' our course, Jack Wright, and it's mighty dangerous to do that."

"Then you acknowledge that you are cruising for the treasure?"

"Oh, that's our business, and we ain't a-tellin' it either—see? I am just advisin' ye to turn back and not interfere with us, that's all."

"We shall do nothing of the kind. My boat can travel twice as fast as yours, so we will reach the wreck long before you do. When you do find Antipodes Island, the treasure will be gone."

"Blow that little beggar to pieces!" raved Crabb, frantically. "Do not let them do anything to dsh us out of that gold."

"Look out! They are loading one of their guns!" cautioned the Spaniard. "It is their intention to fire upon us, senor!"

His keen, roving glance had detected several of the sailors in the act of manning one of the guns, and Jack quickly saw what they were doing and shouted angrily:

"Look out, Simeon Crabb. Don't you resort to warfare or else you will certainly get the worst of it!"

"I'll blow your accursed boat to pieces, by golly, before I'll let you baffle me!" howled the old speculator in a furious manner.

The words had scarcely left his lips when one of the men shouted to him that the gun was loaded and seized the lock-string.

"Tim! Full speed!" cried Jack.

The old sailor obeyed while the gunner was sighting his piece.

With a sudden dash, the sea-motor flew ahead at a sixty-knot pace, just as the shrill voice of Crabb rang out with the command:

"Fire!"

Boom! roared the gun.

There came a flash of fire in the smoke from the muzzle, and with a hideous shriek, the ball flew towards the sea-motor.

She was going so fast, however, that the ball flew wide of its mark and plunged harmlessly into the sea astern.

"Missed!" cried Jack, derisively.

A yell of chagrin pealed from the crew of the Spider Crab, and Jack saw one of their number rapidly distributing rifles among them, while the gunner loaded another of the brass weapons.

Jack passed inside the boat and exclaimed:

"'Bout ship, and run down on her bows, Tim!"

"Ay, ay, lad! Be yer a-goin' ter tackle her?" asked the old sailor, complying.

"I'll just drop one shot on her deck," grimly answered Jack.

He took up a large hand grenade from the box, and went out again, passed up into the bow on the forward deck and waited.

Tim had swung the sea-motor around and retraced her course. She bore straight down upon the bow of the Spider Crab, and when she came within fifty feet of her, the rascals on her deck raised their rifles to their shoulders and aimed at Jack.

The Water Witch dashed ahead like a thunderbolt, and as she was flying by the yacht, Jack flung the bomb and it burst on her deck.

Davy Jones' sailors fired a volley at the same moment, and with an exclamation of pain, Jack reeled and flung up his arms.

"My God! I am shot!" he exclaimed and fell to the deck, senseless.

CHAPTER VII.

PULLED INTO A TRAP.

The shout of alarm that peeled from the lips of Jack's friends was drowned by the terrific explosion of the hand grenade on the deck of the Spider Crab.

The bomb tore up a mass of planking, wounded several of the crew of the steam yacht and filled the rest with dismay.

A moment after the quartermaster of the Spider Crab raced his boat away, and the submarine boat described a circle and came to a pause, while Fritz rushed out on deck; and kneeling down beside his friend Jack, made an examination of him.

He found the young inventor breathing heavily.

There was a sanguinary wound on the top of his head, where a rifle ball had furrowed his scalp, but that was all.

It was only a flesh wound, yet it was severe enough to deprive him of consciousness, and the Dutch boy dragged him into the cabin.

There he was joined by Tim and Cordova.

Measures were taken to revive the boy, but it was a long time before he came to his senses.

In the meantime the Spider Crab had disappeared in the distance, as the Water Witch had been lying, rocking idly on the waves, with no one in the pilot-house.

When Jack revived and was told what had happened, he had a splitting headache, but otherwise he felt all right, and upon an examination of his wound, concluded that it would soon heal.

"Shall we tack off after the lubberly pirate?" asked Tim. "I'd like nuthin' better than scuttlin' his blame ole craft."

"No, keep right on our way," replied Jack, "for I'll warrant you that he suffered more injury than we did from the effects of that grenade, and will run shy of us in the future."

"You vas his deck plo' all ter schmitereens alretty," said Fritz in tones of satisfaction, "und I tink he don't vhas able to go on till he got it rebaired vunct."

"Did any of those bullets injure the boat?" queried Jack.

"Nein. I so don't think."

"Better examine the boat anyway. I'll have to lie down awhile and get over the effects of that shot."

The boy repaired to his state-room and turned in, while Tim went up into the pilot-house, started the boat, and Fritz and the Spaniard made a critical examination of the boat, and found that several panes of glass in the windows had been shattered by the bullets.

It was fortunate that this injury was found, for had they been obliged to go under the sea in a hurry, the water would have poured into the boat, endangering their lives.

Jack had duplicates of many parts of the sea-motor on board, and Fritz procured some new panes of glass and set them in the windows.

The boat went on and they saw nothing more of the Spider Crab.

In due course of time they rounded Cape Horn, and then steered the boat across the Pacific toward New Zealand, to the south-east of which lay the island of Antipodes.

A long, monotonous voyage followed, from the South American coast, and they finally came to within half a day's travel of it, when a singular accident occurred to the Water Witch.

It was late in the afternoon and as the golden shafts of the declining sun added a magnificer^t luster to the dancing waves of the sea, Jack stood on the after deck gazing thoughtfully over the ocean, when his listless glance suddenly fell upon a number of large, moving objects.

They floated in the water at a distance of a mile away to the southward, and after closely studying the elongated monsters for awhile, he finally came to the conclusion that they were a herd of dugongs.

These creatures resembled whales, browsed like cows on the marine vegetation, and in this herd there were a dozen or more.

"By Jove! There's a chance for a break in this dreadful monotony," ejaculated the boy, as a thought suddenly occurred to him.

"Ay, lad, an' what's in ther wind now?" questioned Tim, taking a chew.

"Hunting those dugongs, youder," replied Jack, pointing at them.

"Rather dangerous sport, isn't it?" queried the Spaniard.

"It isn't half as dangerous as whale huntin'," said Tim.

"How do you know, senor?" queried Cordova, curiously.

"Bless yer eyes, I ought ter know," said Tim, expanding in glowing tones. "Wuzn't I born and brought up on a whaler? Why, shiver me, friend, yer don't know nuthin' about the danger o' thet kind o' fishin', but I could spin ye a yarn that would astonish ye in regard to it."

"I should be delighted to be astonished," politely replied the Spaniard.

"Well, here goes," said Tim with a preparatory cough. "It happened when I wuz in the navy. Ther old frigate Wabash wuz cruisin' off o' Greenland, when up comes a whale, an' ther lookout sings out, 'Thar blows,' an' I got permission to go arter her. Five o' us got in a quarter-boat, pulled for the whale an' I let my iron fly. 'Stern all!' I yells as it brung its tail aroun', an' my messmates backed water just in time ter prevent it gittin' smashed. Waal, sir, that ther' whale sounded, came up under our boat an' capsized us an' broke ther boat in two. I grabbed one o' its flukes and away it swum, draggin' me with it like a barnacle. It was a-headin' away from the whaler, an' my messmates was left a-swimmin'."

"You said, senor, it was a frigate."

"Ay, so it wuz; it's a slip o' ther tongue, that's all. Anyway, off she tacked an' I seen as I'd git towed leagues away, when I set my wits tergether as ter how ter stop her, and hit on a werry good plan. Wot do yer think it wuz?" asked Tim in a mystifying tone.

"Compadre! How should I know, Senor Tim?"

"I drewed my sheath-knife and cut off his flipper. I swum aroun' in a circle, an' climbin' up over its back, I cut off ther other flipper. Then I cut off one o' ther flukes o' its tail, an' that brought it up in the wind."

"Wonderful!" said Cordova. "And its tail and flippers so thick!"

"Ay, now, an' ther boat came up with my messmates in it——"

"But, wasn't the boat broken in two?"

"An' takin' me off, they gave me a chance ter lance ther whale ter death," continued Tim, ignoring the interruption disdainfully. "Waal, sir, we tried out that whale's oil, an' makin' for the port of Rio de Janeiro, near by——"

"What! Boiled down whale fat on a man-of-war! And senor, you started in by saying this thing started off Greenland, in the Arctic, and now calmly declare you went to the capital of Brazil, which lies a thousand miles from——"

But before Cordova finished speaking Tim fled as fast as he could stump.

He realized what discrepancies there were in his story, and rather than face the reproachful glance of the Spaniard, he vanished like thin air below.

Fritz held the wheel and Jack went into the turret and told him to steer for the dugongs, so that he might harpoon one.

He then procured his weapon from the store-room.

It was a whaler's harpoon of the regulation pattern, and he attached a long cord to the end of it, and brought a gun out on deck, of the pneumatic type.

This weapon was small, of the Hotchkiss rapid-fire kind, but of great power, and had been stowed away in a locker in the cabin.

Jack loaded it by simply turning a wheel at the side which forced a piston-rod back into an air-valve, and instead of loading it with the regular projectile, he shoved in the harpooning iron.

The carriage of the gun had been wheeled up into the bow of the forward deck, and Fritz steered the sea-motor for the dugongs.

She noiselessly approached to within one hundred feet of them, during which time Jack firmly secured the end of the wire cable harpoon-line to a ringbolt in the deck.

He then took aim at the largest dugong in the herd, which floated in the thickest of a mass of sea-weed upon which they were feeding, and turning a lever, discharged the gun.

There came a thud of escaping air and a shrill whistle, as the barbed iron shot from the weapon over the water.

The next instant the line attached to the harpoon was quickly

uncoiling and the weapon pierced its mark, and was buried to the hilt in the dugong's body.

A convulsive tremor passed over the fish, it bounded up from the water, fell with a violent splash and dove down.

Out ran the line with a buzz until it was all played out, when, with a sudden jar, the bow of the sea-motor was bobbed down into the sea much like the floater on a fish line.

Its extreme buoyancy prevented the dugong from going any deeper, and it started off, submerged to the full depth of the line, dragging the boat after it.

"Shut off the power, Fritz. It's going in the direction we are taking!" the boy cried, his eyes snapping with excitement.

"Dragging the weight of this boat will soon tire the beggar, and he will come to the surface exhausted when we can kill him!"

"Ah, my hearty, but I will stand by to cut the line in case o' accidents," said Tim appearing from the cabin just as Fritz obeyed.

"You can't cut it," said Jack, "it is a heavy wire cable."

"Dash it! The critter's as powerful as a ship's engine."

"He is pulling us right into the rest of the herd, too!"

The dugongs took fright as the boat was towed among them and swam off to the right and left and dove out of sight.

On swept the captive fish, dragging the Water Witch along in its wake, and keeping the cable submerged.

Half a mile was thus covered, when suddenly, and without the least warning, the bow of the boat was jerked downward, and submerged at an acute angle that lifted up the stern.

There she stood, perfectly stationary, the line buried under the water to a depth of about ten or twelve feet, and as rigid as a poker.

"Donner und blitzen!" roared Fritz from the turret. "Vot's diss?"

"She's caught fast, somehow," observed Tim.

Jack could not understand what the dugong had done to get the boat in such a fix, and he finally said:

"We can't remain here, nor can we sever the line in under the water. I think that we had better sink the boat and find out what has happened to the monster to hold us in such a fix."

The rest agreed with this plan.

Assuming control of the boat, Jack sunk her.

She descended, and while she was going down, the search-light was started, and showed them the bottom of the sea fifty feet down.

It looked like the elevation of the sea's bed, on which there was a rocky foundation, and they saw that the dugong had gone through what looked like a mouth of a cavern in the rocks.

The line, catching the edge of the opening, had been holding the boat down.

No sooner had the boat descended when the dugong within the cavern started ahead with amazing speed, pulling the boat toward the opening, which was not quite large enough to let it pass through.

Jack grasped the lever to reverse the paddle wheels in order to stop the boat from going into the dark opening, but before he could start the machinery the Water Witch's bow was jerked in.

She struck in the hole with a terrific crash.

The next instant she came to a pause, jammed in the opening as firmly as though she were held in a vise.

Although Jack started the wheels, they were unable to pull the boat out of the opening, and the conviction finally dawned on the boy's mind that the dugong had pulled them into a trap.

"We're in a nice fix now!" he exclaimed, aghast. "The boat

is so firmly wedged into this opening that I can't budge her an inch."

The rest were startled at this announcement.

"Wet in thunder is we to do then?" gasped Tim.

"Try to get out, of course, do you suppose that I am going to remain here forever?" asked Jack.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIGHTING A DEEP SEA GIANT.

Jack passed into the store-room and put on one of his patented diving suits of metal, the knapsack on his back being filled with enough compressed air to last for several hours.

The lamp on the top of the helmet was illuminated by an electric battery secured on the top of the knapsack, and diffused a strong ray of light.

Having armed himself with a knife, which he thrust into his belt, he went down into the hold and passed out of the sea-door.

He could breathe, see and move about on the sandy bottom of the sea with perfect freedom now, and going up to the bow of the boat, he saw that she was stuck in a large fissure.

It would require extraordinary means to liberate her, too.

The search-light was streaming into the cabin ahead and, going through the opening under the boat, which was brightly lit up by the electric glow, the boy glanced around. He saw that it was an enormous natural cavern in the rock, swarming with fishes, the ground covered with shells, the wall alive with aquatic plants, and the dugong still attached to the harpoon line, lay half dead in the middle of the place.

A number of eels and crabs had assaulted it, and had begun to devour it before the life had left the body.

Jack withdrew the harpoon line and fastened it to the prow of the Water Witch, closely examined the rocks that held the boat fast again and went inside.

"Well, there's only one way to liberate her, boys," he remarked, "and that is to blast away the rocks with torpedoes."

"I vhas been below," said Fritz, "und only except dot dere vhas some dents in her hull, der Vater Vitch don't was broke herself."

"Carramba! We are lucky, senores," said the Spaniard.

"I'll get the cartridges and help yer, my lad," Tim exclaimed.

Jack then prepared an electric wire to explode the cartridges.

When Tim returned with the brass cylinders, the boy fastened the wires to the ends of them, and taking a hand-drill, he went out again and began to bore the rocks.

When he had two apertures made, he buried the explosives in them, and recoiling to the farthest end of the water cavern he flashed his helmet lamp up and down as a signal to Fritz.

The Dutch boy then turned one of the levers, sending a current of electricity into the cartridges, and they burst with a dull rumble.

Particles of rock flew about in the water, and torn from her fastening, the sea-motor recoiled from the fissure a dozen yards.

She was blown free without the least injury to her hull, and as soon as the commotion of the water subsided, Jack started to leave the cavern, when suddenly a huge, dark object shot down from a rocky ledge over his head, and landing upon him, its weight bore him to the ground.

Amazed, he glanced up through the glass in his helmet and saw several huge waving claws moving about him.

It was evidently some monster deep sea creature that had attacked him, and he made an effort to arise and see what his enemy was, when two enormous nippers seized him, one clutching his leg, and the other one of his arms.

These pincers were muscular appendages, for he felt them through his metal diving suit, and it required an enormous pressure to have any effect upon the scales of the steel.

He felt the huge nippers trying to tear him limb from limb, and struggled to get rid of them, without being able to do so, for the grip they had on him was as strong as a vise.

But he managed to get himself into such a position as he could see what had hold of him.

And to his amazement he observed that it was an enormous crab.

This giant of the deep was the largest that Jack had ever seen.

Its body was two feet high and five feet long, and it was of a dark brown color, mottled all over with red spots.

Two huge protruding eyes, black and shining, stuck out from its shell, over which there were a pair of supple horns like enormous whips, while it seemed to stand upon an unlimited number of legs or claws.

It had its hideous eyes fastened ferociously upon the boy, for its ire had been aroused by the explosion disturbing its repose.

Extending its squirming horns, it entwined them around Jack, untwined them, swept them up and down over him as if feeling to learn what sort of prey he was, and all the while it kept its enormous nippers fastened tightly upon his limbs.

He had often heard that deep sea monsters sometimes grew to huge proportions, but never until now had he encountered one of them.

When the giant crab was satisfied with its examination of the boy, it turned and began to crawl away toward a quiet nook at one side of the cavern, with the evident intention of devouring him.

A feeling of intense horror overwhelmed the young inventor, for having felt the strength of its nippers, he knew that once they were clasped over the visor of his helmet they would crack the glass, let in the water, and drown him in a few minutes.

The nippers were armed with massive teeth, and the boy drew his knife and endeavored to cut into it.

He soon found, however, that the blade would not pierce the heavy shell overlapping the tissue.

It was therefore impossible to injure his captor.

The crab dragged him on until it got within the nook it had been heading for, and there it paused and turned its terrifying eyes upon Jack again, while the whip-like feelers coiled about the boy's body, and squirmed up and down again and again.

Waiting until these motions abated, Jack aimed a blow at one of its bulging eyes and the keen blade penetrated the orb.

He turned the blade around and around, an inky substance flowed from the wound and dyed the water black, and the crab gave a convulsive movement and recoiled.

The spasmodic whirl of its claw swung the boy around as if he were a mere whisp of straw, and he struck the wall.

Down he fell in a heap, and for a minute he imagined that he might get away from the loathsome creature, which was now evincing every sign of the most intense agony.

Indeed, Jack got upon his feet and made a rush for the opening in the cave when the crab saw him escaping.

With a lurid gleam in its remaining eye, it swiftly pursued him, and just as he was about to pass from the cavern, he felt the infuriated monster seize him again.

It evidently knew that he had caused its misery, and with beastly instinct, it meant to avenge itself.

A cry of dismay pealed from the boy's lips, for he had been sure of escaping and he now found himself baffled.

But he turned upon the crab with relentless courage and showered blow after blow on it at the point where its remaining eye was, and finally succeeded in totally blinding it.

In this condition the giant crab was a veritable fury.

It swam to and fro unable to see what it was doing, clawing at the boy as it dragged him along with its nippers, and seeking by every means in its power to tear him to pieces.

Fortunately its attacks upon the metallic suit were in vain, but several times when the claws went grating over his visor, threatening to break the glasses, he shivered with dread.

Upon finding that he had the advantage, Jack now stabbed the crab repeatedly where its legs joined its body, and he finally had the pleasure of seeing it laying prostrate, with one of its pincers broken off and several of its legs gone.

"Victory!" muttered the boy, as he grasped one of the remaining legs of the monster. "You was a foe worth fighting, but I am sorry to say that your dignity had departed with your death for I am going to take you aboard the boat and consign you to a stew-pot. Come along now, old fellow!"

And dragging the dead crab through the cavern by its leg, Jack emerged on the bed of the sea, in full view of his companions who were all in the sea-motor's pilot house.

He brought the monster on board, and in answer to the amazed questions of his friends, he told them the story of his encounter.

"Shiminey! Vot a grab!" exclaimed Fritz, when he concluded. "I make some soft shell crabs by toast mit him, and wait till Dim vhas spring vun out his yarns on us. His mouth id vhas so big he vhas been able to eat something about dis size alretty."

"Belay my hearty," growled Tim, his solitary eye gleaming angrily. "Don't crack too much sail on your jawin' tackle, or ye may unstep yer masts. This crab ain't nuthin' ter the size of a turtle wot I once caught when I wuz in ther navy, aboard o' the ole frigate Wabash."

"Rats!" interposed Bisniarck sagaciously, just then.

Every one laughed and Jack questioned his friends about the hull of the boat, and found that it was only dented.

He then divested himself of his diving suit.

"Let us ascend to the surface and continue our journey," said he.

"Si, senor," assented Cordova, "but no more dugong fishing, if you please, or we may get killed the next time."

Tim took control of the boat.

He raised her to the surface and Fritz dissected the crab, and began to prepare them a meal of it.

Not one of the dugongs remained on the surface of the sea and the Water Witch resumed her journey, with Tim at the wheel.

On the following day the welcome cry burst from Tim of "Land ho! Land ho!"

The old sailor stood in the bow on deck, shading his eye with one hand and pointing to the south-west with the other.

Jack came on deck with a spyglass and directing it at the faint distant speck dotting the surface of the sea, he soon made it out to be an island.

Referring to his log book, the boy soon announced:

"The island ahead of us is the Antipodes, boys!"

"Ave Maria!" ejaculated Cordova. "Tis the isle whereupon La Paloma was cast by the waves! Our journey will then soon be ended, and we shall go back to civilization with a vast fortune."

"Perhaps!" replied Jack in dry tones.

"Ha! You express some doubt, senor."

"Well, the waves may have washed her afloat again, you know."

"Very true. I did not think of that."

"However, we can soon see for ourselves, Cordova."

The sea-motor was kept steadily on, her pounding wheels leaving a foamy wake behind the boat, and within a short space of time they came close to the island.

Jack in the meantime got out his nautical instruments, and taking an observation of the sun, he calculated their latitude.

In this manner he discovered that the land was really Antipodes Island.

Jack remained on deck and all hands kept a sharp look out for the stranded wreck.

In due course of time a complete circuit of the island was made, but despite the most eager and vigilant watching nothing was seen of the wreck.

A sigh of deep disappointment escaped Jack when they got back to their starting place without seeing the ship.

"I am afraid my prediction is true," said the boy. "The ship must have been washed into the sea again."

CHAPTER IX.

ATTACKED BY SAVAGES.

Jack's prediction was based upon seeing unmistakable evidence of there having been recent very high tides along the shore, for there were great masses of sea-weed clinging to the rocks bordering the shore to the height of twenty feet above the low tide level.

The island was large and rugged, and the temperature about the same as our own, and its trees and shrubs were dense in the interior.

From their nearness to shore, Jack could see that there were not many animals on the island; indeed, it was only known to contain bats, rats, native dogs, lizards and frogs, but the sea-shore swarmed with blood-thirsty sand-flies, myriads of mosquitoes filled the bush, wingless and tailless birds ran over the ground, and there were some wild pigs and rabbits in the jungles.

Jack was not satisfied with his defeat.

"I think that we had better go ashore and see if we can't find some trace of the ship really being here!" he exclaimed, in restless tones. "If it can be proved that she was here, and there is any possibility of ever finding her, I will track her."

Cordova cheered up wonderfully upon hearing this, for he had been cast into the profoundest depth of despair upon finding that his cherished project might have been only a fizzle.

Indeed, he hardly dared to meet Jack's suspicious glance, for it seemed to him that the boy imagined that he had been led off on a wild goose chase.

"By all means let us go ashore, senor," he exclaimed. "Maldicones! I cannot be deceived in this matter."

"Yah!" ventured Fritz. "I don't vhas wanted to make yer sick alretty, but s'bosen somephody else vhas here been vonet und taken dot boat away—you tink we found it?"

"We can at least prove Cordova's claim," said Jack quietly.

"Ay, now, my lad! That's fair, an' spoken like a man!" said Tim.

"Head her in shore then, old fellow, and we'll land at the spot where it was alleged that the wreck lay."

The boy referred to the papers, and locating the place where the wreck was last seen, they slowly advanced in shore.

At this point the beach was shelving and sandy, and a small lagoon ran inland, into which the Water Witch passed.

It led the adventurers into a lake that nestled in the heart of gloomy woods; the water was filled with tree stumps, broken branches and dead leaves, and the shore was bordered by overhanging branches of trees that cast a shadow on the surface.

Advancing cautiously to the shore, they found a deep pool close to the embankment, and lay to close to the bank.

Power was shut off, and the boat lay motionless.

Jack sprang ashore with a bow and stern-line and made them fast to the adjacent trees.

He was assisted by Tim and the Spaniard.

As soon as the Water Witch was secure they started off for the sea-shore, in back of which the lagoon lay, and upon reaching it the sand-flies attacked them.

Their bites were intolerable and half maddened the three.

It was impossible to fight against them, so the three dashed back to the boat and got inside again.

Here Jack plastered their faces, hands, and necks with a compound that was bound to keep the pests at a respectful distance, and when they sallied out again and went shoreward they found that the ferocious insects left them severely alone.

Pursuing the beach for some distance, they finally arrived in the neighborhood where the wreck was supposed to have lain, and searched about for some trace of it.

For some time their trouble was unrewarded, and Jack was about to give up in despair, when suddenly he observed a piece of broken china lying half buried in the sand, and picking it up, he saw the name burnt in it, after the manner of most ship's crockery: "La Paloma."

"At last! At last!" he exclaimed.

"Wot now, lad?" asked Tim, looking up.

"I've found evidence of the wreck having been here."

"Bueno!" shouted Cordova, delightedly. "What is it, senior?"

Jack showed them what he found, and they instantly became excited.

"Thar's no question now but wot she wuz here," said Tim, confidentially.

"None! And see there on the shore how the sand is dug up," said Jack, pointing at a deep groove. "Her keel must have passed over that spot. There are plain enough marks of it. Now I can see through it, she has certainly been washed back into the sea."

"Dio, nos libre! Then she must again be drifting—eh?"

"That's accordin' ter whether she's stove in."

"If she is, she'll lie at the bottom near here," said the boy.

"And if she is yet adrift, senior?"

"That's a question ther currents hereabouts 'll settle, my hearty."

"Your remark gives me an idea, Tim," said the boy, suddenly. "It would be a hopeless matter to scour the sea in quest of that wreck. But it's natural that she will drift into the nearest strong current, and that current will carry her along. All we have to do now, if she doesn't lie sunk off this shore, is to find the current and follow it. By that means we may overtake the derelict. Indeed, there's no other way to trace her."

"Hurrah!" chuckled Tim, waving his cap. "That's ther course."

"Then let us return to the boat, senores," said Cordova, in feverish tones, "and get to work at once. The longer we delay the longer it will be ere we capture La Paloma, and you know Simon Crab is on his way here with his gang of ruffians to try to bag us."

"Unless he meets with the wreck before we do," said Jack,

as they started to return to the Water Witch, "he will have a deuced hard job to win this game, I assure you."

They plunged in among the trees in back of the beach, and were hastening along, when there suddenly sounded a most sibilant hiss, and glancing swiftly around, to Jack's surprise he saw an arrow whiz by his head.

It stuck in the tree behind him and quivered there.

"Halt!" exclaimed the startled boy, pausing.

"Wot now?" queried Tim, following his example.

"See there!" said Jack, pointing at the arrow.

"Savages!" hissed the Spaniard, springing behind a tree.

Jack and Tim followed suit.

They saw no hostile aborigines and heard nothing suspicious.

But they had no sooner screened their bodies when there came a flight of arrows from among the bushes ahead of them, and the whistling darts shot all around them.

"It's an ambuscade!" exclaimed the boy, vehemently.

"Jerusalem! An' we near walked plumb into it!"

"Perros podridos!" hissed Cordova, angrily. "What are they?"

"Maoris!" replied Jack.

"Holy smoke! Then they're cannibals!" gasped Tim.

"Exactly!" assented the boy. "Are you armed?"

"No! Why should I be, lad? I didn't 'spect no savages here."

"Nor I, and consequently I didn't carry a weapon."

"Carramba, but I am prepared!" hissed the Spaniard.

He hauled a big pistol from his hip pocket, surprising Jack, as the boy did not know he went armed on the Water Witch.

Cordova peered out from behind his tree, but saw no one, for the Maoris were cunning wretches and skillful warriors, enemies of all white men, and kept carefully concealed.

The Spaniard knew where they were hidden, though, as he had detected where the arrows came from, and raising his weapon, he fired a shot at the bushes ahead.

The report had hardly died away when there sounded a wild yell, a crash in the bushes, and a half-naked negro sprang into view.

He fell prone on the ground, writhing and screaming, and several more like him suddenly appeared.

They were screaming like madmen, brandishing their war clubs, shields, spears, and bows, and sending another volley of arrows toward Jack and his companions, they made a rush for the adjacent trees when Cordova opened fire upon them.

None of the arrows could reach our friends behind the trees, but in dashing from their coverts the savages had exposed their bodies to the deadly aim of the Spaniard.

He was a magnificent shot, for he bowled several of the Maoris over ere every cartridge was used in his weapon.

The savages were yet between the trio and the boat, and Jack shouted to Cordova:

"Don't waste every cartridge you've got, for we've got to make a rush to get aboard the Water Witch, and may need a few——"

"Ah, senior, que lastima, I used up all my cartridges!" cried Cordova. "You spoke too late. I was so excited I scarcely knew what I was doing. And now we are as bad off as ever!"

"If them lubbers finds it out they'll bear down on us an' rake us fore and aft!" growled Tim, taking a consoling chew of plug.

"Then let us make a circuit," advised the boy. "They are firing at us now out of splte for the wounds you dealt."

Breaking from cover, they shot along the margin of the woods, and saw the rest of the Maoris, who now numbered about a dozen middle-sized, well-framed men, skulking after them by dodging from tree to tree.

Our friends had to exercise great caution to avoid getting hit by the flying missiles their enemies shot at them, and worked their way toward the lagoon.

The savages now noticed that no more shots were fired back at them, and it seemed to embolden them, for they became more careless about exposing themselves.

"Look out now!" cautioned Jack. "They are gaining on us."

"What shall we do—we can't return their fire?" blankly asked Cordova.

"Dodge their missiles and get as near the Water Witch as you can."

"Fritz ahoy!" yelled Tim at this juncture.

The lagoon was now but two hundred yards distant, and they could see the deck of the Water Witch near the bank, but there was no signs of the Dutch boy to be seen.

"Where is he, anyway?" impatiently asked Jack, as he nimbly sprang aside to avoid a whistling spear which one of the natives hurled at him. "He must have heard our shots and the yells of those black rascals."

To reach the boat now they would have to break from cover and run, as there were no intervening trees, and Tim gave the Dutch boy another hail.

Still no response was vouchsafed.

"We have no time to wait for any assistance from him," said Jack breathlessly. "One bold dash now and we will reach the boat."

They rushed into the clearing, but Tim had not gone ten yards ere his wooden peg struck a rock, he tripped, and down he fell.

A shower of missiles were hurled at the fugitives, and one of the war clubs grazed Cordova's head and knocked him senseless.

Jack reached the boat and glanced back, when to his horror he saw the sailor and the Spaniard surrounded by a yelling horde, who were struggling to make a captive of Tim.

Several of the blacks came speeding toward the sea-motor, on observing which Jack rushed inside, closed the door, and fastening it, he pulled the shutters over the windows.

A moment after this was done the natives reached the boat and boarded it.

CHAPTER X.

TRACKING THE WRECK.

The sliding shutters on the Water Witch were furnished with narrow loop-holes, and as Jack peered out of the pilot-house he saw a number of the Maoris on the deck.

Off among the trees he saw Tim and Cordova made captives and carried away into the bushes, and in response to his cries for Fritz he received no answer whatever.

It therefore became apparent to him that the Dutch boy was not aboard of the sea-motor.

Arming himself with a pneumatic repeating rifle of his own invention, capable of firing twenty shots, he went to one of the loop-holes, thrust the barrel of his weapon through, and began to bombard the savages with a rapid volley.

The bullets were miniature bombs, bursting when they struck their mark, and thus proved to be excessively destructive.

Several of the blacks had been making futile efforts to break through the walls of the deck-houses with their massive clubs, but when Jack opened his destructive fire upon them they sprang ashore and rushed away pell-mell.

Within a moment they disappeared among the bushes, and Jack put on one of his metallic diving-suits for protection, and going out on deck, he yelled at the top of his voice:

"Hey, Fritz! Hulloo—Fritz! Where are you?"

"Ach du Heber Gott!" came the reply. "Don't yer vhas seen me alretty?"

"Whereabouts?" queried Jack, staring around blankly.

"Up by der trees!" yelled Fritz.

Jack glanced in the direction from whence the sound came, and there he saw the Dutch boy safely ensconced in the dense foliage of a near-by tree, up into which he had climbed when the trouble began, as he was unarmed, and retreat to the boat had been cut off by some of the savages who stood near the shore.

Fear of discovery, it was evident, was what prompted him to so discreetly keep quiet when they were hailing him.

He came sliding down the trunk of the tree, his fat face as red as fire, and waddled toward the boat as fast as his stumpy legs would carry him.

"I hear me dem shots, und I go me ashore to find me oudt vot it vhas alretty," explained he, in panting tones. "Den vot you tink—dere I see me dem safages, und vhen some of dem got bedween mineselluf und dot shores, I vhas glimb me up dot drees so gwick like dunder. Und dere I vhas been effer since alretty!"

"Did you see the natives capture Tim and the Spaniard?"

"Yingonettys, yes! Vot I could do? Nodings."

"Fritz, we must save them—pursue them."

"But I don't vhas got me a bistol."

"Run in, get on a suit like mine and arm yourself."

"Shiminey Christmas, now you vhas dalkin'!" said Fritz, complying.

He soon reappeared, armed to the teeth and clad in a suit of mail, closed the door of the boat and hurried after Jack.

They were both determined to rescue their companions, and soon found the trail of the blacks leading through the bush.

It was easy to follow it, but they had not gone far ere they heard a fierce cry among the bushes, and a shower of weapons was fired at them. They broke harmlessly against the metal suits.

They were the blacks who had possession of their friends, and the two boys at once blazed away at them.

Several of the savages rushed toward the lagoon with the two prisoners, while the rest covered their retreat, and they drew several large dugout canoes from their places of concealment and put Tim and Cordova aboard.

Jack and Fritz poured such a deadly fusillade into their opponents that they beat a hasty retreat, and the boys followed them until, chancing to glance over toward the water, Jack saw his friends in the canoe and the savages making off with them.

"Halt, Fritz!" he panted, stopping abruptly.

"Who's der matter?" gasped the Dutch boy.

"They are fooling us. While some engaged our attention fighting them, the rest have embarked in canoes, and made off over the lagoon with their prisoners."

"Donner vetter!"

They ran toward the lagoon, but by the time they reached the shore the natives' canoe was far out toward the middle.

A few moments later several more canoes, filled with the dusky fellows they had been pursuing, shot out on the opposite side of the lagoon, and joining the one containing the prisoners, they surrounded it, and the whole fleet moved along toward the opening in the headland.

"It won't do any good to fire at them from here!" cried Jack.

"Vhy don't yer come apoard ouf dot sea-modors den, und vican chase 'em dot vay alretty!" said Fritz eagerly.

"Splendid! Just the plan! Follow me!"

Away ran the boys for the Water Witch, and unmooring her, they sprang aboard, and went inside just as the flotilla of canoes glided out through the entrance to the lagoon.

Hastening up into the pilot-house, Fritz started the boat after the canoes heading along the shore.

The one containing Tim and Cordova was in the lead, and

steering the boat after it, Fritz soon began to overhaul them. As soon as the Maoris saw the sea-motor in pursuit of them, they set up a shout which could have been heard a great distance away, and began to paddle for the shore.

"Look out, Fritz!" the young inventor sung out hastily as he observed what they were doing. "Don't let them land that canoe containing the prisoners, or we may lose them."

"Den I run bedween der canoes und dot shores?"

"Yes—cut them off! Quick! More speed, or they'll beat you!"

Around went the lever, and the sea-motor darted like a gun-shot between the island and the scattering canoes.

Upon seeing that their intention was anticipated, the natives went in all directions, and a scene of excitement ensued.

Fritz kept cool and level-headed.

His eyes were fastened upon the canoe containing his friends, and he ran the sea-motor toward it.

Divining that our friends were intent upon wresting their prisoners from them, the savages who guarded them became very much excited, and began to loudly talk.

Before the Water Witch got within one hundred feet of the canoe, a huge black, armed with a war club, sprang to his feet, and raised his weapon.

Whiz! went a shot from Jack's rifle.

A shriek of mortal agony followed, and the black reeled back, flung up his hands, and toppled over into the water.

Three more blacks remained in the canoe.

Observing the fate of the big warrior, another one aimed his spear to stab Tim, when a second ball struck him in the arm, and it was blown to fragments.

The remaining two now became panic-stricken, and flinging their paddles away, they crouched whiningly in the bottom of the canoe, leaving the boat to drift with the current. Up to the canoe dashed the sea-motor, and as it came alongside the now terrified blacks sprang into the water.

The young inventor stooped over the side, and grasping the canoe, he held it until the sea-motor came to a pause. Fritz then joined him, when they liberated the two bound prisoners, and sent the canoe adrift, as Cordova had revived.

The Spaniard had a big and painful lump on his skull, and Tim was scratched and bruised, but they were otherwise uninjured.

Most of the canoes by this time had reached the shore of the island, where the blacks debarked and fled inland.

As soon as our friends recovered from their excitement, Jack pointed in toward the shore, and said:

"We are in exactly the right spot now to descend and search the bottom of the sea for the wreck of the La Paloma, for yonder is the place where I picked up the broken dish."

"Let her go down, then, my lad," assented Tim, as he court-plastered his big, red nose. "I'm ready fer business, fer one."

"Scarcely anything, senor, less than a fatal wound would interfere with my anxiety to begin operations," said the Spaniard eagerly.

"Hull on vonct until I see dot eferydings vhas shut up," the Dutch boy interposed, and off she went on a tour of inspection.

"Land sakes," gasped Tim, "I'm jist gittin' woke up."

"Wasn't our adventure just a little too much for you?" asked Cordova.

"Me?" echoed Tim disdainfully. "Why, bless yer inner-cent heart, I don't feel's if I wuz a-livin' onless I'm a-killin' niggers. Ole marines like me aln't rigged like you land-lubbers—we're borned fer fightin', tooth an' toe-nail all ther time. I reckenlect——"

"Are you going to tell a story, senor, about the navy?"

"Ay, ay! Wot we jist went through wuz nothin' but plum-duff an' extree grog ter wot my last fight in ther navy wuz. Ther ole Wabash stood off Charleston under fire fer ten cold hours, an' none on us had a taste o' water or bite o' food in two

days, but we wuzn't a-goin' ter flinch till we blowed ther redoubt ter pieces wot we wuz a-bombardin', so we stood ther shot an' shells, an' kept on a-firin' till all our cannon-balls wuz used up. Wot ter do now we didn't know. But jist at that crisis, wot d'yer think?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Why, I collected a wad o' five-dollar bills, rammed 'em into a gun, fired it, an' five minutes artewards thar wuzn't one o' ther enemy lef'."

"What! Paper money?" incredulously asked the Spaniard.

"Ay; ther minute ther enemy seen ther picture o' Gen. Grant on 'em they got skeered an' fled!" said Tim, with a broad grin.

A look of supreme disgust crossed Cordova's face upon finding that Tim had fooled him, and he might have said something uncomplimentary to the old sailor if Fritz hadn't come in.

The Dutch boy announced that the doors and windows were all closed up, and the air reservoirs filled.

Jack then set the pumps in motion, compressed the air into the end chambers, let water into the central compartment, and the boat sank out of sight, much to the astonishment of a number of the cannibals who were watching it from their covert among the trees.

Down went the Water Witch to a depth of forty feet, when the sandy bottom was clearly discerned gleaming beneath them, and the search for the wreck began.

It is needless to dwell upon the long and arduous task that followed, occupying several days, but suffice it that after a wearisome search, they found no trace of the missing wreck anywhere near the island.

They were therefore forced to believe that she had drifted away again in a powerful current which they found running at the rate of five miles an hour off the shore of the island.

It was then decided to pursue this current to the westward, and they finally started away in it, and left Antipodes Island astern of them forever.

CHAPTER XI.

WAIFS OF THE SEA.

The Water Witch was caught in the great Australian current called Mentor's Drift, which ran northeastward and joined the Equatorial current, carrying her along the eastern coast of New Zealand.

But when the sea-motor reached the tropic of Capricorn, the current turned her abruptly to the westward and left her near Hunter's Island.

An incessant lookout for the wreck had been maintained, but not a sign of her had been seen by any one.

"If she is afloat," said Jack, one evening, as he sat out on deck with Fritz, "she must have followed this current, and we are bound to fall in with her sooner or later."

"I tink so ncider," replied Fritz, as he lit his pipe and nodded.

"Had I not perfect confidence in this fact," said the boy, "I would not have followed the matter up as far as I've gone thus far."

"Land-ho! Land ho!" interrupted Tim at this juncture, from the pilot-house.

Jack sprang to his feet and saw the old fellow peering ahead with a glass.

He glanced in the direction watched by Tim and saw a faint, dark object, seeming rising up from the sea athwart of their course.

"What do you make it out to be?" he inquired of the sailor.

"Pears like a small island," replied Tim, laying down the glass.

"A very small one, indeed," Jack commented. "How far off?"

"Werry likely six miles."

"Run for it, Tim."

"Must be one o' ther Hunter Islan's, my lad."

"We are heading in the right course for them."

The sea-motor rapidly bore down upon the dark outline, and after the lapse of quarter of an hour, Tim suddenly cried:

"Why, blast my timbers, if it are a' islan' arter all!"

"It isn't? Let me see through the glass."

"I'll be jiggered if it ain't a big raft!" said Tim, handing out the glass.

"And there are several sailors on it," added Jack, applying the glass to his eye and intently studying the floating raft.

He saw that it was constructed of various parts of a ship, and had a jury mast, upon which a tattered sail was rigged.

There were seven men in sailors' costume upon the raft, and they were signaling by waving their hats and jackets.

The Water Witch steadily bore down upon them, until at last they faintly heard the sailors shouting to them.

Upon a close approach they were hailed with:

"Ship ahoy! Ship ahoy!"

"Ah-o-y!" cheerily answered Jack.

"For God's sake pick us up!" implored the castaways.

"All right. We will reach you in a few moments."

The Water Witch steadily bore down upon them, and one of the sailors, all of whom were evidently Americans, flung him a rope.

As soon as Jack made it fast to a stanchion, the sailors hauled in on the line, and when the raft bumped alongside they clambered aboard of the sea-motor.

One of the men then cast the raft adrift.

They were all respectable-looking seamen, but were evidently in great distress, as their faces were haggard, their eyes sunken, and they betrayed every sign of privation.

"Why did you cast the raft adrift?" queried Jack.

"So you could not set us adrift on it again, sir," replied the seaman who did it. "We have already spent a week upon it, drifting at the mercy of the wind and waves, and we don't want to return to our past misery without food or water."

"Have you been starving?" asked Jack, pityingly.

"We are half famished. Three days ago our food gave out, and yesterday morning we drank the last drop of water we had on board."

"Fritz, for Heaven's sake prepare some food for these men, then, and bring each a drink without delay."

The Dutch boy hastened away to obey, and the sailor said:

"That raft is the last of the Bellfounder—as fine a clipper ship as ever ran between Australia and San Francisco. She was driving through a storm, when she struck a drifting wreck somewhere about this neighborhood, and with a hole stove in her garboards she went down. Most of the crew took to the boats. We built the raft you found us on, as there was no room for us with our messmates, and we just had time to get afloat when the ship foundered."

"A drifting wreck?" questioned Jack with sudden interest.

"Yes; submerged to her scuppers. We lashed our raft to her and she was driven along northward by the storm. Probably we owe our lives to that wreck, as the raft might have gone to pieces in the storm if she hadn't held us up."

"What became of it?"

"Two days ago our chafed hawsers parted, and we let it drift off on its course to the northward."

"Did you see the name of the wreck?"

"Yes. She was a Spanish-built ship."

"And her name?" eagerly asked the boy.

"La Paloma!" answered the castaway.

"Found!" cried Jack, a thrill running through him.

"Donner vetter!" roared Fritz, coming out with a can of water just in time to catch the last remarks. "Where she iss?"

"Within fifty miles of us, in this current," answered the sailor. "Why?"

"Because we are in search of that wreck," replied Jack.

"Indeed!" ejaculated the castaway, taking his share of the water.

"In no dime ve found dot fessels now," chuckled Fritz, as he finished giving the castaways their water and went into the galley to prepare them some food.

"We knew that Hunter's Islands must be near here," said the sailor, "and were on the lookout for them, when we sighted this singular-looking vessel. If we could once reach there, we would be all right, as we know that a companion ship of the Bellfounder is going to stop there soon. But since you have so kindly picked us up, I suppose you will carry us to port, with you, so there will be no need of going to——"

"But we ain't going to any port in a long time," said Jack, "and we cannot very well keep you here with us. If, nowever, you wish to be set ashore on one of the Hunter's Islands, I will see that it is done."

A look of utter disappointment crossed the sailors' faces upon hearing this news, but their spokesman said:

"Since you are so situated, we would be grateful if you would set us ashore where we want to go, then."

"It shall be done," replied Jack. "You see we are pursuing that drifting wreck, and another vessel is doing the same. The first to find her is to be the owner, and as there is a very large sum of money on board, we must not let this chance slip by, since we are in such close proximity to her——"

"Money?" queried the sailor, with a greedy look.

"Yes, a very large sum—a fortune, in fact."

"Oh, if we had only known it when our raft was hitched to her!"

"Luckily for us you didn't!"

The sailor, unseen by the boy, caught the attention of his companions, made them a warning gesture to keep still, and satisfied they understood him, he turned to Jack with:

"Well, it's our loss and your gain, I suppose. Now you may calculate where she must be, drifting along to the eastward——"

"You said she was drifting northward!" said Jack.

"Did I? Well, I was mistaken—she was going rapidly to the eastward, wasn't she, boys?"

"Ay—ay!" replied the rest of the sailors.

"And you think she is within a radius of fifty miles from here?"

"You might say one hundred more correctly," answered the sailor.

"That's the second contradiction you've made."

"I want to show my gratitude to you for saving us by being as accurate as possible, so you'll be sure to find the wreck."

"Oh. Then give me an idea of about which course to follow."

The man readily mapped out a course for the boy, and, leaving them for a few moments, Jack went inside to tell Cordova the news.

Hardly were the castaways left alone, when they grouped themselves around their spokesman, and several eagerly asked:

"Why did you tell him to go in a direction opposite that in which the drifting wreck is really floating?"

"Hush, yer stupid fools! Can't you speak lower? He or some one else on board might overhear you. I've got a scheme in view by deluding him. He was certainly an idiot for telling me there was so much money on that wreck. Can't you tell what I'm up to? I send him off on a phantom hunt to the east-

ward. In the meantime we will be landed on Hunter's Island, and there meet the ship we expect, enlist the skipper with us, and off we go to the westward. We will then find the wreck, get the money and divide it."

Exclamations of the most intense satisfaction broke from the sailors over this shrewd trick."

"Silence!" muttered their plotting leader. "Here comes the boy who seems to command this singular craft."

Jack just then came out on deck smilingly, and said:

"Step into the saloon, friends, and you'll find a hearty meal there that will do your stomachs good after your trials of starvation. Now, Fritz, here comes our guests."

And heading the procession of treacherous fellows, the good-hearted boy led them into the saloon, where a good, hearty meal was spread invitingly upon the table for them.

CHAPTER XII.

HELD BY THE ENEMY.

The seven sailors sat down to the table, and Jack took a seat at the head of it and served them to the food, while Fritz ran around attending to their wants, and they devoured the meal voraciously.

It was evident by the way they ate that they were in a starving condition, but after awhile their ravenous appetites were appeased, and they regained a more cheerful look.

"Now, my good fellows, you look much better," laughed Jack, glancing from one to the other, "and as you all seem to be real sons of the sea I have no doubt you would all like to finish up your rations with a good glass of grog?"

"Ay, now," assented every one of them, eagerly.

"You have hit the nail square on the head," said their leader.

"Oh, I know the nature of a sailor, my friend. Here, Fritz—I say, Fritz, where are you anyway?"

"Comin'!" bawled the fat boy, hurrying in.

"Get a bottle of Jamaica rum and serve each of these poor fellows a glass to wash down their dinners and cheer them up. They need a little stimulant, by Jove!"

"Vat's de matter mit lager beer?" asked Fritz, with a grin.

"No, no! They prefer the rum. I've already opened a bottle. It stands in the kitchen, upon the locker. Fetch it in, my boy!"

Fritz waddled away and presently returned with a tray upon which stood the bottle Jack mentioned, and seven glasses, for the young inventor did not drink liquor.

Every one was then served, and drank their potations to the dregs, when Jack started a lively conversation among them, and presently got them all talking.

But this did not last long.

One by one the rescued sailors fell fast asleep around the table in various attitudes, and when the last one dozed off a change came over Jack's face, and he sprang to his feet.

The merry smile left him, and a frown as dark as a thunder cloud gathered upon his brow, and he pointed at the sleeping men, and turning to Fritz, he exclaimed passionately:

"The treacherous hounds!"

"Hey! Vot!" gasped the Dutch boy, in astonishment.

"I've trapped and baffled the ungrateful plotters!"

"Ach! I don't knows me vot you mean."

"I've drugged those rascals with that rum!"

"Trucked 'em?" gasped Fritz, more and more astonished.

"Exactly. They were planning to dupe us."

"Vill you explain me dot, ouf you blease alretty?"

"I caught their spokesman contradicting himself about the direction in which the wreck was drifting from us, and it at once aroused my suspicion. I left them alone on deck, say-

ing I was going to apprise Cordova of what they said. Instead, I hid in the saloon and listened to their conversation."

"Vell?" queried Fritz as the boy paused.

"They gave themselves away. The leader directed me to go eastward for the wreck, when it was really off to the north or westward. He did this so that he could join a companion ship to the Bellfounder on Hunter's Island, and while we were attentively searching for La Paloma in the wrong place, they would go to the right place, get her, and secure the gold."

"Sacrament!" exclaimed Fritz, furiously, as he glared at the sleepers.

"I got a drug, put it in the rum, and—well, you know the rest."

"Pully for you, Shack. But vot ve vill do mit 'em?"

"Lock them up in an empty room after we bind them hand and foot."

The Spaniard was called in, and the matter was explained to him, when they tied the drugged schemers up and locked them in one of the store-rooms.

They all gathered in the pilot-house after that and held a consultation.

"The sea-motor has passed the zone of calms," said Jack, "where the wreck was probably drifting slowly when struck by the Bellfounder, and the storm, unusual in that district, must have blown her into the monsoon southeast trade winds, which blow from April till September. If caught thus, her pace would be augmented, and her course would be from Antipodes toward New Guinea."

"Blast it, don't that reckonin' show plain as them lubbers wuz a-lyin' ter yer?" growled Tim. "We has our course now, an' we're boun' to foller it."

"If I may offer a suggestion," said Cordova, in tones of spite, "it would be advisable to rid ourselves of those malditos, the sailors, and protect our interests by marooning them on an island in the Pacific so far removed from the one on which they wish to land to meet their friends, that they will never encounter them, and thus thwart our project! We need never fear them again, then."

"Oxackly," concurred Fritz, "und vhen ve got 'em dere, let's knock blazes oudt ouf dem mit a club, to remember us by alretty."

The boat was kept on her present course, and night fell after awhile, and Jack and Fritz finally turned in.

Cordova was kept on doing duty with Tim, and had got so that he could manage the Water Witch quite well.

The moon arose in the starry sky, the sea was almost as smooth as a sheet of glass, and a faint breeze was blowing.

Holding the wheel, and keeping the boat out in the current which was then drawing the sea-motor along, Tim was giving his companion one of his agonizing yarns, when Cordova discovered a ship under full sail in the distance.

He called his companion's attention to it.

The vessel was evidently a large merchantman, and had a full head of canvas aloft to keep the faint breeze moving her.

When she drew nearer the old sailor observed that she bore the name of the "Dolly Spanker" in gilt letters on her bow, while she carried the American flag.

"Shall we hail her?"

"No need," grunted Tim.

"But she might know something of the drifting wreck," urged Cordova.

"I reckon not. You're so anxious ye thinks every one sights ther Paloma."

While they were thus conversing their prisoners had been busily employed making their escape from the store-room.

Recovering and finding in what a predicament they were placed, one of them loosened the bonds of another one's arms with his teeth, and that one getting free liberated the rest.

It was easy for them to realize that their rascality was ex-

posed, and by the same argument they knew that they were drugged.

Not knowing but what their lives might pay the penalty of their treachery, they determined to fight the crew of the sea-motor.

Finding the store-room door open they ran through, arming themselves with every available article they found, and hearing the heavy breathing of Jack and Fritz, they had gone to the state-room and deftly bound and gagged the two sleepers ere they awoke.

Not knowing how many there might be on the boat, and hearing Tim and Cordova talking, they cautiously made their way to the pilot-house, and overheard them speaking about the Dolly Spanker.

Up the stairs crept several of the traitors.

Tim and the Spaniard had their backs turned toward the castaways, and were perfectly oblivious of their presence until they crept up behind the two and attacked them.

The sailor gave a yell, and the Spaniard an expletive as they turned upon the castaways and fought them.

Overcome by superior numbers after a desperate struggle, however, they shared the fate of Jack and Fritz.

Panting and exhausted, the two lay on the floor, bound and gagged, while the castaways ransacked the Water Witch in quest of more men to conquer, without finding any.

"There's only these four on board, boys!" exclaimed the leader of the crowd, jubilantly, "and they're all in our power now. We've got possession of this craft, and there's nothing to hinder us from going in search of the drifting wreck ourselves."

"Ay, but how are we to manage this craft?" blankly asked the man who had assumed control of the wheel. "She don't work by sail or steam, and I'm hanged if I can see how to operate her."

"She's run by electricity," said the leader of the gang. "I saw that when I was down below. But I reckon we can force one of her crew to explain to us how to manage her."

"Steamer, ahoy!" came a hail outside, just then. "Veer off! Veer off!"

The doors and windows were all shut, but glancing out through the glass the castaways saw the ship, Dolly Spanker.

She and the sea-motor were running together at an angle, and bid fair to collide when the warning hail came.

The quartermaster spun around the wheel of the Water Witch, and she diverged and passed the merchant ship, when a simultaneous cry of surprise pealed from the castaways upon seeing the ship's name.

For she was the craft they expected to find at Hunter's Island.

Indeed, she was on her way there now.

The leader of the party was just about to answer the hail, when the man at the wheel caught sight of the levers, and wondering what they were, he indiscreetly moved one of them.

A moment later the boat began to sink, upon observing which, the mean rascals gave a yell and bolted for the doors to get out.

Before they reached them the Water Witch sank beneath the sea, carrying them down toward the bottom, and, to their amazement, they instantly found that they could breathe and live in her, submerged.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DRIFTING WRECK.

Unsatisfied by finding the boat steadily descending, the leader of the castaways hastily ungagged Tim and cried in tones of fright:

"For Heaven's sake tell me how to raise the boat!"

"Turn letter B," replied Tim, quickly.

This was done, but instead of descending, the boat merely paused.

"She isn't rising!" yelled the man, frantically.

"No danger," coolly said Tim. "She's a submarine boat."

"Oh!" ejaculated the man, in tones of relief.

"See if all doors an' winders is made fast. Quick."

Away scattered the terrified men, and their examination began.

Shortly they returned.

"Everything is closed up!" said the leader, anxiously.

"Good! We're safe then," replied Tim, nodding his head.

"Yes, but we want to get on the surface."

"We can live a short time down here, my hearty."

"How can I raise the boat?"

"I don't know how to work the machinery."

"Then who does?"

"Jack Wright."

"The boy?"

"Ay, ay."

"Fetch him in here, boys!"

Two of the sailors went to the state-room where Jack and Fritz lay bound and carried the young inventor up into the turret, where he saw at a glance that the boat was submerged.

He was ungagged, and the castaway leader said:

"I want to raise the boat to the surface, but don't know how."

"Then there's where I've got the advantage of you," said Jack quickly.

"Should you refuse to tell me I'll blow your brains out."

"You would then deliberately lose all chance of ever ascending."

"Do you refuse to inform me?"

"I do."

A furious look crept into the man's eyes, and he ground his teeth, for he saw that he was at the boy's mercy.

Turning to the helmsman, he hissed:

"Try each one of these levers in turn till you find the right one, but be cautious, and reverse them the moment you find they work wrong."

"Let me advise you not to do anything of the kind," said Jack.

"Why not?"

"You'll get in trouble if you do."

"Oh, I'll risk anything to get out of here."

"Very well—go ahead and take the consequences."

The leader made an impatient motion to the helmsman.

He turned a lever, and the Water Witch dashed ahead, and though he tried to check her, he could not do so.

The next lever he touched flashed a wave of electricity through the boat, shocking every one who touched any of the metal work, and knocking them spinning, yelling like madmen.

Continuing, the man turned another lever.

Every one of the lights were extinguished, and every effort of the man failed to stop the electricity flowing into the boat, or the lamps to light up again, and as the rascals came in frequent contact with the metallic parts of the boat in the darkness they received innumerable electric shocks.

Their yells and expletives made up a wild pandemonium.

"Don't touch any more of those accursed levers," yelled the leader of the gang. "You will blow up the infernal vessel next."

"I told you how it would be," said Jack.

"For pity's sake explain how to work the boat."

"No, sir, I won't do it."

"We can't stand this much longer."

"Very true. As soon as we use up all the air on this boat we will smother," quietly replied Jack, to increase his terror

"Are you inhuman to stand it without offering to save our lives?"

"Not exactly. But you have treated us so confoundedly mean after we saved you from the raft that I haven't any mercy on you, and as you have got us in your power, I'll hold you in mine and put a quick end to your lives under the sea here."

"Merciful Lord, relent. I'll release you. I'll do anything. This is fearful, rushing through the water in this gloom, under the sea. We may strike a rock and go to pieces."

"Take off my bonds, then."

The man did so, and Jack arose.

He turned on the lights and shut off the electricity.

He then fastened a stout wire to a thick binding-post on the wall, and turning to the castaways, he said to them:

"To get the boat upon the surface I must have assistance. At every one of you pull on this wire when I give the word."

"Yes, yes," rang out eagerly on all sides, as they seized the wire.

Jack stopped the onward flight of the boat, and seeing that the seven men had hold of the wire, he turned a heavy current of electricity into it and it flashed through them.

They could not let go of the wire.

With howls and oaths they spasmodically danced and jerked, and a merry peal of laughter rippled from Jack's lips as he left them strung on the live wire, utterly at his mercy, and released his friends.

"Fasten the scoundrels with shackles this time so that they can't escape again, boys!" cried Jack. "They can't get the best of me long."

"We're duped!" raved the leader of the party, wildly.

Fritz, Tim, and Cordova handcuffed them, and they were returned to the store-room, while Jack raised his boat to the surface.

By this time the Dolly Spanker was miles away, and the sea-motor rode alone in the moonlight over the ocean.

Our friends were jubilant over their victory.

"I didn't expect them to retain their advantage long," laughed Jack. "Now look there— isn't that an island off yonder?"

"Ay!" replied Tim, glancing away to the northward.

"Then I'm going to set them ashore. It's nuisance to keep them."

A small island arose in the sea a league distant, and heading the boat for it Jack ran her into a small sheltered cove.

It was covered with tropical vegetation, and was one of a group that festooned that region of the Pacific.

As soon as the Water Witch came to a pause in water deep enough to float her near a grassy embankment, the prisoners were all marched up on deck, and Jack said to them:

"We are going to maroon you here."

"What, on this desolate place?" cried the man, in dismay.

"You can thank Heaven that I've spared your miserable lives."

"True. We ought not expect much mercy from you."

"Then you realize how mean you have been?"

"Remember, large sums of money have made demons of better men than we."

"Go ashore," said Jack, removing the handcuffs.

The seven men left the submarine boat and stood on a knoll, carefully watching her as she went away from the island.

On the following day the Water Witch plowed her way in among a group of islands adjacent to the one on which they left the castaways, and Jack saw that some of them were inhabited by blacks, who stood on the shore intently watching the sea-motor as she was passing by.

Some of them shouted and gesticulated to the boat, others rushed into the surf and swam after her, and not a few were paddling out in canoes.

But the speed at which the boat was going soon left them far behind, and they returned to their shores again.

In the afternoon, as the sea-motor was going along at a sluggish pace, not far from the largest island, Cordova came rushing into the pilot-house from the after-deck where he had been sitting in the shade, smoking a cigarette, and cried, excitedly:

"Carramba, there is a big wall of mist rushing after us!"

Jack was somewhat startled and glanced back, but a smile came over his face as he saw that it was a white squall coming up astern.

"It's only a gale of wind bearing down upon us!" he replied, coolly.

Just then Fritz, who stood on the forward deck, shouted:

"Shack! Dere vhas a dutzen canoes mit safages comin' cudt from dot island, und dey vhas for someding in der vater going alretty."

The boy peered ahead and saw the dugout boats.

Each one was manned by half a dozen savages, who came from the big island, and they were paddling toward a dark object floating in the sea.

As soon as he reached it the boy saw the blacks secure short lines between it and their canoes, and then paddle in shoreward, towing it after them.

With his curiosity aroused, he levelled a glass at the floating object.

A cry pealed from his lips.

"It's the wreck of the La Paloma!" he shouted. "I see the name on her stern, just above the water, by jingo!"

The rest were electrified.

"Go fer it!" gasped Tim.

Jack started the boat faster.

She shot ahead with her excited crew in a fever of anxiety to wrest the wreck from the savages, but she had not gone fifty yards when with a shriek the white squall reached her.

A wall of foam burst over the boat, the gale rolled her under the leaping waves, and the next moment she was buried in a dense mist that veiled the savages from view.

Upon finding that he had his hands full to keep the boat on an even keel in the gale, and unable to see anything of the wreck, Jack was obliged to turn all his attention upon the sea-motor.

CHAPTER XIV.

DRAGGED FROM THE WAVES.

The white squall that struck the Water Witch kicked up such a rough sea that Jack was forced to keep his boat before the boisterous wind, to prevent the waves breaching over her.

She was driven along in the dense foggy mist, and a cry of vexation escaped the boy at this unexpected interruption just as he caught sight of the La Paloma, captured by the natives of the big island, and being towed ashore by their canoes.

That it was the Spanish vessel they were searching for there could be no doubt, for his glass had plainly revealed the name, painted upon the stern ere the squall arrived.

Cordova shut all the doors and windows to keep the water out, and Tim joined the boy in the pilot-house, but Fritz remained out on the forward deck on lookout.

"By heavens!" exclaimed Jack, vehemently, "I wouldn't have had this storm arise for anything at this time."

"Ay, lad, but ther Spaniard warned yer it wuz pursuin' us."

"Very true, Tim, but in the excitement of seeing the wreck for the first time after all our tiresome search for it, I had forgotten the approach of the squall."

"Never mind, my hearty, as soon as the gale blows over we kin come back, tackle them 'ere niggers, an' git ther ole hulk

away from 'em. Squalls comes quick an' goes quick, yer know, so it won't be long afore we returns."

"You are a hopeful fellow, but I must say this is a hard storm—we are in the violent monsoon region, you know," replied Jack less confidently. "See—the haze is thickening."

Overhead some heavy banks of clouds had swept up with amazing rapidity and a sullen gloom settled down upon the tempestuous sea.

The wind blew against the tide and that made matters much worse, so that the boat was soon buried in flying showers of water and spray as she forged heavily ahead.

"Can't ye sink her here then?" suggested Tim.

"A good plan. We could thus escape the storm, and keep our location so that if we want to find the place where we saw those blacks towing the wreck ashore we won't have any trouble. I think I'll do it, Tim."

Jack was about to follow out this plan when a dull booming on the starboard side reached his ears.

"Wot's that?" muttered Tim, overhearing it.

"Sounds like a gun!" replied the boy.

Just then they heard Fritz out on deck yell wildly:

"Breakers aheth! Breakers aheth!"

"We are running aground!" muttered Jack.

"Port your helm!" continued the Dutch boy, loudly.

Around spun the wheel in the boy's hand, just as a grating noise along the keel warned him that the sea-motor was grazing over a sandy shoal below.

The Water Witch veered off to the south.

And only just in time, for the faint outlines of a high wall of surf was made out ahead, breaking with thunderous roaring upon a rugged coast line.

As the boat went rushing out into deep water again, Jack turned to the old sailor with a grim look and said:

"It's a good thing we didn't attempt to go down here, or the waves would have washed us high and dry on that shore. Then we would have been in a pretty fix!"

"Wot's keepin' ther Spaniard away so long, I wonder?"

"He went to close the doors and windows."

"Ay, but he said he'd be right back."

"Run back and see if he's all right, Tim."

The old sailor stumped into the after compartment and heard the door slamming that led out on the after deck.

There were no signs of Cordova there, but the old sailor now heard a wild yell of horror coming from outside.

He hobbled over to the door and peered out, and to his alarm he beheld the Spaniard, caught by a big wave, washed from the deck into the boiling sea.

"Help—help!" he shrieked frantically.

"Holy smoke!" gasped Tim. "He's a goner!"

Rushing out on deck, he tore a life-preserver from its fastening on the railing and flung it toward Cordova.

The man could swim, fortunately, and seeing the cork ring he struggled toward it and finally seized it.

A moment afterward, the boat going on, he was swallowed up in the dense mist astern.

Tim hastened back into the pilot-house.

"Cordova's overboard!" he yelled to Jack.

"Whereabouts?" demanded the boy.

"Astern? Can ye turn back for him, lad?"

"We'll have to face the squall, but I'll try to save him."

Around plunged the boat as he spoke, and she rolled and pitched in the teeth of the gale for a moment.

Jack put on more power.

Under the added impetus given her, she fought her way along in the wind's eye and retraced her course.

Tim shouted the news to Fritz, and Jack put the wheel in the old sailor's hands and went out to join the Dutch boy.

They beat about for some time, and finally heard the voice of Cordova shouting off to the leeward for help.

The sea-motor was then directed toward the spot from whence the cries came, and presently they saw the tossing body of the Spaniard clinging to the life-preserver.

Tim steered the boat for him as straight as an arrow, and when the unlucky fellow saw the boat coming to his rescue, he strained every muscle of his body to reach it.

The waves buffeted his body about and baffled every attempt he made for some time, but he finally managed to reach the conical prow and grasped it, when Jack rushed to his assistance.

He had a rope tied around his body. Fritz held the other end, and he boldly went over the rail, down on the cone in the face of the waves, and grasped Cordova.

Just as he was about to pull the man up, a big billow swept up and dashed them both into the sea.

"Fritz!" shouted the boy, "haul in!"

"Don'd ye leaf go ouf dot, Cordova," roared the Dutch boy.

He hauled them both up to the side of the plunging boat which Tim was turning around, and they finally managed to get up on the deck again.

Hastening inside, the Spaniard, thanking his lucky stars that his life was saved, they changed their wet clothing and joined Tim.

"How under the sun did you go overboard?" asked the boy.

"Compadre, it was from no choice of my own, senor," replied the Spaniard, glumly. "I was closing the sternmost door which had blown open, when a wave rushed in and deluged me. The first thing I knew I was washed out on deck, and there a second billow caught me up just as Tim came out."

"You didn't hat a very wide escape," said Fritz.

Cordova shuddered, for he best knew how near killed he was.

The storm lasted several hours, the boat, in the meantime, being swept along like a mere cocked shell, and then the wind abated as suddenly as it arose.

As soon as the fog lifted and the sun shone down, the sea became calm again.

They had been driven many miles away from the isle where the La Paloma was seen drifting, and retracing their course, began to hunt for it again.

Night fell upon the sea, dark and gloomy, and it began to rain when the searchlight was started, and by its light they finally discerned a surf-bound island.

A search was then made for some harbor in which to run until the next day, when the search for the drifting wreck was to have been resumed.

It resulted in their finding a small river flowing into the island, and directing the Water Witch into the channel, which was sufficiently broad and deep enough to give her passage, they ascended the stream a short distance.

None of them knew exactly where they were, but imagining they could easily ascertain with the dawn of the next day.

The sea-motor was brought to a pause.

Flinging the anchor overboard, the watch was then divided, and Tim and Cordova turned in, leaving Fritz and Jack on duty in the pilot-house.

The long, monotonous night wore away, the watch was changed, and with the dawn of the ensuing day the rain-storm stopped, and Tim glanced out the window.

His gaze wandered up the stream in which they were anchored, and his solitary optic suddenly became fixed upon a startling scene not fifty yards from where they lay.

"Jerusalem!" he gasped.

And well might the old sailor look amazed.

For there in the stream lay the Spider Crab at anchor, and her crew, including Simeon Crabb and Davy Jones, were standing at the taffrail, glaring down at the Water Witch, for they had recognized her at a glance!

CHAPTER XV.

DISASTER AT A CRITICAL MOMENT.

Tim's cry had not only startled Cordova, but also Jack and Fritz, who had just arisen, awakened by the dawn of day.

"What's the matter, Tim?" asked the boy.

"Lord save yer, lad," replied the old sailor, "Simeon Crabb's yacht ther Spider Crab, lies anchored in this island river only few fathoms ahead, an' all han's is on deck thar a-starin' down at ther sea-motor."

"Good heavens! how did he manage to get here?"

"Likely as not, put in here ter anchor till ther storm o' last night stopped, 'cause he can't know as the La Paloma is a-fittin' off ther big islan' where we seen ther savages a-tryin' pull her ashore wi' thar canoes."

"There's no telling where we are," said the boy. "We may be at one of the islands in the group of which the big one is, of which you made mention. We can soon find out, though, and as for Crabb's boat, well, who knows what information she may have received about the location of the wreck?"

"Do you think, senor, that he fell in with the seven treacherous sailors of the Bellfounder whom we marooned?" asked Cordova, in anxious tones.

"Perhaps. Anyway, I'll go out on deck, and while I'm accosting them you had better get up the anchor."

The boy went on deck, and there came a howl of anger from Crabb's men upon seeing him, for they could not forget how the daring boy had flung the bomb upon the deck of the yacht and blown it to fragments some time before.

"They feel spiteful against me," muttered Jack.

Just then Simeon Crabb yelled at the boy:

"Hey there, you young scoundrel!"

Jack's nerves tingled, and he did not reply.

"Do you hear me?" screamed Crabb in a louder tone of voice.

Still no reply from the boy:

"Wright!" roared the old rascal, waving his arms.

"Well," answered Jack, coolly, "what do you want?"

"Why didn't you answer me?"

"When I am addressed properly, I reply."

"Oh, indeed, my fine gentleman," sneered Crabb. "How will Mr. Wright do?"

"It is correct for you to address me thus."

"Confound your impudence. What are you doing here, anyway?"

"That is none of your business, you old villain."

Just then Jack observed a man on the yacht's deck whom he had not observed before, and he gave him a violent start. For the man was the leader of the seven castaways of the Bellfounder.

That clearly showed the boy what brought the Spider Crab there.

It was plain to be seen that Crabb picked them up, and elicited the fact from them of the location of the drifting wreck.

The boy communicated his intelligence to his friends.

Upon receiving the boy's reply, Crabb had gone off into a paroxysm of fury, denouncing the young inventor in hot terms.

"By golly," he cried, "I'll make it my business! You've tracked us here. Well, if you want fight, we will give you all you want."

"Look out!" warningly said Cordova, "they are training to bear upon us, senor, and look desperate enough to do so."

"Anchor's a-trip!" announced Tim just then.

"How much depth is there under us?" asked Jack.

"I vhas measured twenty feets," said Fritz.

"Then sink the boat and I will fix those rascals so they can't bother us."

Going inside, they prepared the boat for a descent and when everything was in readiness, Jack submerged her before the crew of the Spider Crab got their guns loaded.

The river was muddy and the Water Witch passed near the bottom.

Jack then put on a diving suit and taking a long rope with a clamp fastened to it on the end, he went on deck with it.

Tim then started the sea-motor ahead very slowly so as not to make a commotion with the wheels that could be seen on the surface, and in a few moments they came to a pause under the yacht.

Raising the boat so Jack could reach the keel near the stern, which was pointed towards the mouth of the river, the boy then fastened the clamps on the yacht.

Jack then motioned to his companions, and the old sailor reversed one of the levers, when the Water Witch ran backwards toward the sea, and passed out of the mouth of the stream.

By that time the clamp line had been pulled taut.

Expecting that the crew of the Spider Crab would not remain there very long after the disappearance of the sea-motor, they soon found their surmise to be right.

She swung out into the stream, and her propeller began to work.

Again Jack beckoned to Tim, and secured the clamp line to a stanchion.

The old sailor then started the Water Witch ahead under full power, and despite the Spider Crab pulling in the opposite direction, the sea-motor dragged her out into the river.

No one on board the yacht knew what had hold of their boat, and a scene of excitement ensued upon her deck while the sea-motor was dragging her off against her captain's will.

Out to sea she was pulled, and when they were a half a mile from shore, Jack unfastened the end of the clamp-line from the stanchion, and secured a grapnel to the end.

He dropped it overboard.

There was plenty of rope and the grapnel went to the bottom and caught fast among some ropes.

And there the yacht was anchored, resisting the propellers, and the anchor line out of reach of her crew.

Jack then went inside of his boat.

"Run off half a mile and raise her to the surface, Tim!" he exclaimed. "I have got the boggars good and fast now."

"Ay, ay, lad. Off we go!" replied Tim, obeying.

The Water Witch sped through the brine like a whale, and when at a safe distance from the anchored yacht she arose to the surface.

A fierce yell from the ruffianly crew of the Spider Crab greeted her appearance, and Jack passed out on deck and saw Davy Jones in a quarter boat, rowing around the yacht and closely examining her, in an effort to find out what held her there.

It is probable that Jack's enemies had a suspicion that he was the cause of their trouble, judging by the expressions they hurled at him when his vessel appeared.

The boy glanced at the island.

It was not the same one where he had seen the savages towing the La Paloma away, but it was one of the same group.

"They are puzzled," remarked Jack, "they don't know what holds the yacht there as they can't see the anchors, and it successfully resists the strain their propellers have put upon it, too."

"Werry likely they'll stay there until doomsday," grinned Tim.

"Oh, no. Crabb has got his boat furnished with diving apparatus for this voyage, and will soon think of sending a man beneath the boat, when the diver will see what holds the boat and then cut the ropes. Hullo! What ails him now?"

"Carramba! They seem to be excited," said Cordova.

"Vot dey vhas bointin' at, I vunder?" queried Fritz. "Dot look to me like dey vhas see someding off by der vest over dere."

"Where's my glass? I will take a look," said Jack curiously.

He found the binocular and directing it off to the westward, he scanned the sea, when Cordova exclaimed:

"They are manning the boats and rowing like mad."

"Now I see what attracts them," said Jack, lowering his glass.

"What is it?" anxiously asked the Spaniard.

"The drifting wreck of the La Paloma."

"Donner vetter! Where she was?"

"About one mile off. See—they are heading for her!"

The boy excitedly pointed off to the westward, where they barely discerned the dark hulk of the Spanish derelict on the horizon.

Exclamations of surprise pealed from every lip.

"Start the boat!" cried Jack. "We must beat them to the wreck, for if they reach it first we will have no claim upon it."

"Ay!" gasped Tim, grasping one of the levers.

"They are already a quarter of the distance there!" gasped Cordova.

"Never mind, we can catch them and pass them yet!"

"Holy Moses!" roared Fritz, "why don't you start her, Dim?"

"I can't," hoarsely cried the old sailor, turning deathly pale.

"Why not?" panted Jack in surprise.

"The lever won't work," groaned Tim.

"Vot's de matter?"

"Oh, Lord, the machinery must be out of order!"

"Por Dios, senores, we will lose the treasure after all!"

"Wait!" cried Jack, desperately, "we ain't lost yet——"

"Waal, yer boat won't answer her lever, anyway," answered Tim.

"I will go below and see what is the matter!" cried Jack.

And away he dashed to the machinery department, leaving his three companions waiting with anxious faces and throbbing hearts to learn what the trouble was.

In the meantime they peered out of the pilot-house window and watched Simeon Crabb and his men in the yacht's two boats pulling with might and main.

Half the distance was then covered, and in an agony of suspense that was absolutely painful the three still waited for Jack.

CHAPTER XVI.

A HUMAN TARGET.

"Tim!" yelled Jack through the speaking tube below.

"Ay, ay!" replied the old sailor in the pilot-house.

"Start the boat—quick."

"Be ther machinery all right now?"

"Yes, one of the belts slipped off a wheel."

"Did yer replace it?"

"Yes."

"Thank ther Lord."

Tim turned the starting lever and the propeller spun around. Off dashed the Water Witch like a streak of lightning, and the young inventor came running up on deck.

He saw that Crabb's boats were three-quarters of the way to the wreck.

The sea-motor had a great deal of space to cover to overhaul them before they reached the wreck of the La Paloma, but she was going swiftly through the brine for Tim had on full power.

A cry of rage pealed from Crabb when he saw the sea-motor coming tearing along so swiftly, and he howled:

"Pull away! pull away! The Water Witch is coming, by golly. They are fast overhauling us. Oh Lord! They'll beat us yet. Make those oars hum, you rascals; do you want to lose the treasure? That's work. Work with a will. Bend your back bones! We'll reach her in a minute. Remember the first to reach the wreck owns her. The first to reach the La Paloma will get ten thousand dollars from me."

Thus excited, on his crew rowed with a will.

The stout ash oars fairly bent in bows as they strained every muscle, and sent their boats flying through the brine. On came the sea-motor like a thunder-bolt behind them; the race became hot and exciting.

Although the Water Witch was rapidly overhauling them, the yacht's boats gallantly held on their lead, and as they were only separated a short distance from the wreck, despite the rapidity with which they were being overtaken, it looked very much as if they would reach the wreck first.

Jack became nervous and restless.

He ran up into the bow and peered eagerly ahead.

"Can't she go any faster, Tim?" he asked.

"Not a bit. She's under full power now," replied the sailor.

"I am afraid we will lose the race."

"No! See how we are gaining."

"But they have only got fifty more yards to go!"

"Ay, but we're a-top o' them now."

"Head straight for their boats, Tim."

"Run 'em down?"

"Yes!" shouted the boy grimly.

The Water Witch leaped ahead like a greyhound, and forged up to the flying quarter-boats at a wonderful rate of speed.

In one minute more the boats were within five yards of the wreck, and a yell of joy pealed from Crabb.

But it was short lived.

Just as the boats arrived within an oar's length of the wreck the bow of the sea-motor shot between them.

Struck on each quarter, both boats were knocked aside as mere cockle shells, and the one containing Crabb was capsized.

Into the water he plunged with his yelling men.

The other boat was sent flying in the opposite direction.

Tim had his solitary eye fixed intently upon the wreck, and as the prow of the sea-motor was just grazing it, he steered her around to avoid a collision.

The Water Witch struck the wreck with her run on the port side, and Jack made a flying leap from the deck down upon the wreck just as the collision occurred.

The Water Witch rebounded but the boy landed upon his feet on the deck of the La Paloma.

"The wreck is mine!" he shouted victoriously.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" screamed his friends.

The boy stood alone on the deck for the Water Witch had gone off at an angle under her high rate of speed, the old sailor being unable to stop her immediately.

In the water Crabb and his boat's crew were frantically struggling to keep afloat, while the men on the other boat were rowing up to lift them from the water.

The big steam yacht was immovable yet.

As soon as Crabb and his men were picked up by the other

boat, and the old skinflint saw Jack in possession of the wreck, a look of malignant fury crossed his wrinkled old face.

"Defeated, by golly!" he shrieked shaking his skinny fist at the boy.

"Badly!" mockingly replied Jack from the wreck.

"May the demon fly away with you."

"Don't rave. It won't do any good."

"But you cheated—you swindled—you did not race fair."

"I did. And I beat you honestly."

"No, you didn't. You fouled my boats."

"Had you been in my place you would have done worse."

"Never, by golly, never. I claim the wreck on that foul."

"Well, you won't get it. You was in the way—got there purposely with your customary meanness to make me swerve aside to round you. Had I done so and lost a foot of space you might have won. But you have lost. Now go home."

"I won't give up the wreck without a struggle."

"Such a course is rank madness!" exclaimed Jack. "I'll fight you to the death before I give in. Do you hear?"

"You'll see, by golly!" screamed the scowling old rascal.

He boarded the yacht with his men.

At that moment the sea-motor was about a quarter of a mile away, turning around to return to the wreck.

Jack glanced at the anchored steam yacht and saw the crew hauling a gun to bear upon him.

As soon as it was in position the gunner fired, and a ball came humming across the water toward the wreck.

It went whistling by Jack not a yard distant, and striking the edge of the deck, knocked a piece off and fell into the sea.

"They are making a target of me!" muttered the boy in dismay.

There was no place to shelter himself for the old ship was all submerged to her scuppers, and her deck-houses, bulwarks, and in fact, every object that would afford a shelter was gone.

Solitary and alone, the boy was the only visible object they could fire at except the floating planking.

He saw a diver go over the side of the Spider Crab to find out what anchored her where she rode, and observed his enemies reloading the gun to fire another shot at him.

Off in the opposite direction was the Water Witch gliding toward the wreck, Fritz and Cordova on deck and Tim in the pilot-house.

"If I remain stationary," mused the boy. "they may easily blow me to pieces, whereas by moving about, they cannot get true aim, and will have to trust to luck to hit me."

This idea in view, he began to pace about the deck while his enemies were loading their weapon, and saw that if he escaped their fire and secured the wreck, he could tow her ashore at high tide, and when the water receded empty the wreck, and thus have but little trouble to get the treasure.

"But is the gold yet aboard?" he questioned.

There was a great deal of doubt about this for the La Paloma had long been exposed to the investigations of other people, who long ago might have secured the money.

In the midst of his reflections the boy saw that his enemies were ready to fire, and observing that the submarine boat was in a good position to get struck in back of him, he shouted to the sailor:

"Keep away, Tim, they are going to fire."

"Blame the lubbers, they can't."

"Haul off to the leeward, I tell you."

"Werry good, but —"

Bang! went the steam yacht's gun just then, and the screaming shot came flying toward the wreck at random, for the boy had prevented them from getting aim at him by moving about.

There was no dodging a cannon ball.

Moving about was more dangerous than standing perfectly still when the missile was flying toward him, so Jack remained quiet, and the next moment it struck the wreck.

The shot penetrated the hull beneath the water, and a shower of splinters was flung into the air.

They were followed by a rush of bubbles and escaping air, for the ball had penetrated the water-tight compartment which had so long held the La Paloma afloat.

She at once sank.

Down she settled, leaving Jack swimming in the eddy on the surface of the sea, caused by her sudden submersion.

"They've sent her to the bottom at last!" gasped the boy as he swam toward the sea-motor, which now flew to meet him. "It was an unlucky shot for Simeon Crabb, for now the boat is placed further from his reach and nearer to mine if she has not gone down in a greater depth than any boat can penetrate."

Waterlogged, the La Paloma had gone to the bottom like a shot.

A wild howl of intense chagrin pealed from the crew of the Spider Crab when they saw how disastrous their shot had been.

It was answered by a triumphant yell from Jack's friends and when the sea-motor reached the swimming boy, he was picked up and carried away.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SHOWER OF GOLD.

"Here is the place where the La Paloma sunk," said Jack a few minutes later.

"Und efery ding vhas retty to go down," the fat boy put in briskly.

"Then, send her down, Tim," Jack exclaimed.

"Wait! See thar!" said Tim, pointing to the steam yacht.

"Carramba! They have got free from the anchor we fastened to her!" the Spaniard exclaimed vehemently, as he glanced at the Spider Crab.

"The diver sent down must have discovered it," commented Jack.

"We den can exbect dem here, difin' for dot wreck."

"I shouldn't wonder. But we will reach the sunken boat first."

"Here we goes down now," said Tim turning a lever.

The sea-motor's driving wheels stopped suddenly, and she descended into the briny depths, with a slow, gliding motion.

No soundings had been made so the depth was a matter of uncertainty where the drifting wreck had gone down.

Jack kept his glance fastened on the register, and Tim sent the rays of the searchlight streaming in all directions.

A depth of ten fathoms was marked ere the bottom was discerned, about three fathoms lower down and upon arriving within seven feet of the bottom, the descent was stopped.

The sea-motor had gone into a submarine jungle, in which thousands of fish darted out, while in obscure places, the most hideous objects lurked, glaring out at the Water Witch.

Allowing for the uneven surface of the bottom, Tim sent the boat off in quest of the La Paloma.

She had not gone far when the bottom suddenly sloped down to a sheer depth of fifty feet, showing that the Water Witch had sunk on the crest of an under-water hill.

By the gleam of the search-light Jack saw the remains of a ship lying half buried in a bed of sand at the bottom of the gloomy hollow, its skeleton ribs festooned with moss and lichens, and the surrounding sand strewn with anchors, chains and other iron work.

"You will have to cross this valley, Tim," said the boy.

"D'yer calkerlate as she's on the other side, Jack?"

"She may have sunk at an angle, you know."

"Then I had better tack around in a circle, hadn't I?"

"You'll find her quicker that way."

The old sailor nodded and when the sea-motor crossed the depression and reached the other side, Tim had to raise her a few yards to keep her above the mean level of the bottom.

Here there was a broad expanse of sand like a prairie, and scarcely any fishes floating over it as there was nothing but scattered molluscs to feed upon.

It was, in fact, a dreary desert waste.

The sea-motor, continuing on, soon left it to plunge into an animated forest of floating trees with long, straight trunks, that swayed with the strong currents as those on land do before a heavy gale of wind.

Here they saw numerous sea otters and globe fishes moving about with remarkable speed.

A dark object was drifting along within a few yards of the hilly bottom, and upon nearer approach they saw that it was the body of a dead negro native of one of the islands.

The gruesome object soon passed out of sight, drifting in a submarine current, the remains followed by a large school of fish that evidently meant to devour it.

In a few minutes more a high cliff of coral abruptly appeared ahead of the Water Witch, and Tim raised her to a height of forty feet to go over it, when upon reaching the top, he was delighted to see the La Paloma resting there.

Tim stopped the motor.

"Here she are now!" he exclaimed.

"Bravo!" ejaculated Cordova, delightedly.

Plainly revealed in the effulgent glare of the search-light, was the dismantled hull of an enormous, old-fashioned frigate, with a hole blown in her side by the shot from Crabb's gun.

She was keeled over on one side, resting on the top of a coral reef which the polyps had not half completed building.

Her planks were evidently waterlogged.

Nothing but the water-tight compartments had kept her afloat until the cannon ball tore one open.

There was room for the sea-motor to land near her and under instructions from Jack, the old sailor brought her to a pause on the reef at the bow of the wreck.

Here they saw the name La Paloma carved on the bow, and thus were assured that there could be no mistake in the boat.

As soon as the boat came to a pause, Jack, Fritz and Cordova each put on a diving suit and left the Water Witch.

Jack at once proceeded toward the wreck.

There was no time to lose as he knew that Crabb would soon be hovering over the spot with his boat, and send some divers down who would dispute their possession of the wreck.

Upon reaching the lowest side of the La Paloma, which was tilted over toward the middle of the reef, they clambered on board.

The planks of the deck were very slippery with a slime which had gathered there from her long submersion while floating.

But they crept up to the companionway, leading into the cabin between decks, and descended the stairs.

The cabin was flooded, of course, and they saw that everything that had been able to float had been washed out of it.

Considering the long time that she had been filled with water, they found everything in a fair state of preservation.

Their electric lamps on top of the helmets shot a brilliant gleam around the place and illuminated everything.

The papers with which Cordova had been furnished by the

Spanish government gave an explicit account of where the money and papers were when the vessel was wrecked.

Following, therefore these directions, Jack passed through the cabin to the wall at the end, and in this end he found a door of steel set in the woodwork.

But it was securely locked and they did not have the key.

This was the ship's treasure locker, and the papers said there was a safe within the strong room, in which the valuables had been stored when the La Paloma was at Cadiz.

It was necessary to break into the strong room.

Then they would have to open the safe by some means.

Finding that tools were necessary, Jack returned to the Water Witch and procured several dynamite cartridges and some wire.

The former he fastened to the metal door.

With the wire he made a circuit between the explosives and the battery in the sea-motor, and they then left the wreck.

Tim was signaled as he watched them from the pilot-house window, and sending the electric current into the circuit, he discharged the cartridges.

There came a smothered rumble and the water was agitated.

Returning to the flooded cabin, Jack saw that the strong-room door had been shattered to fragments.

Penetrating the locker, he found the big safe intact, but lying over upon its side on the floor.

It was necessary to blow it open.

He accordingly fixed several cartridges to the door by means of cup suckers, and connecting them to the battery with a wire, the three retreated to the deck of the wreck.

From here Tim was signaled again.

He turned on the battery.

The explosion that ensued, violently rocked the wreck.

Down into the cabin dashed the three, but scarcely were they at the bottom of the stairs, when the wreck toppled from the edge of the reef, and the three startled inmates were flung over and carried down with her.

When she reached the bottom with a shock, Jack and his companions were flung into a heap in the corner.

It was several moments before they recovered.

But as soon as they got upon their feet they realized what had happened and they saw that the wreck rested upon her keel.

Fritz and Cordova joined him.

Then they hastened over to the treasure-locker and as the light from their helmet lamps streamed in, they observed that the door had been ripped from the safe, was torn to pieces and lay on the other side of the room.

In went Jack, followed by the others.

A cry of delight pealed from his lips.

For streaming from the interior of the safe was a shower of bright, new Spanish gold that glittered in the glare of the electric lights.

The boy eagerly approached it and knelt down in front of the safe, when he saw that the gold came pouring from a stack of rotten canvas bags which had been stowed in the safe.

Besides this gold there was only a small japanned tin box in the safe, which, too, was securely locked up.

That it contained the valuable papers belonging to the Spanish government, Jack had no doubt.

He eagerly drew it out and glanced at his two companions.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SILENT UNDER WATER BATTLE.

No words or signs were necessary to explain anything as everything spoke for itself to the three.

To transfer the gold to the Water Witch, it was now necessary to have some sort of a receptacle.

Jack took the tin box, beckoned the other two to follow and made his way out of the cabin.

When they got out of the wreck they flashed their lights around, but saw that the Water Witch had not come down from the top of the coral reef yet.

Tim, of course, must have seen the wreck fall from the reef, as he had been pointing the search-light to stream upon it, but why he had not followed it puzzled them.

They had scarcely noticed the absence of the boat when Jack's quick glance rested upon several dark objects over their heads.

They were human forms.

"Divers from the Spider Crab," he muttered.

His conjecture was not wrong.

He grasped Fritz by the arm and pointed up at them.

No sooner had the Dutch boy and the Spaniard seen the divers, when the minions of Simeon Crabb reached the bottom and saw the wreck and Fritz, Cordova and Jack on her deck.

They carried electric lamps in their hands, with wires that ran to a battery upon the steam yacht, and were armed with sheath-knives and short-handled axes.

Fritz counted seven of them.

Not one of the three were armed as they did not expect to find any use for weapons, and as the Water Witch was nowhere in sight and out of their reach, they realized that they were placed at a serious disadvantage.

That the divers would attack them there was no question, and they could not do a thing to prevent them from taking the gold.

Both Fritz and Cordova glanced helplessly at Jack, not knowing exactly how to act, but they were not long kept in suspense on this point.

The seven divers held a brief conversation in the deaf and dumb alphabet, and drawing their weapons they strode as rapidly as possible toward the wreck.

"It is useless to try to stand up to them!" muttered Jack, "so the best thing we can do is to retreat, for one blow with any of those weapons would break the glass visors in our helmets and drown us here."

He motioned Fritz and Cordova to follow him.

Then he left the wreck before the strangers got near them, and they retreated to some distance away from it.

Several of the divers swarmed up on the La Paloma with their electric lanterns, and with a feeling of despair, the anxious trio saw them go down into the cabin.

Sure to find the gold, they would now very likely take it away in the rubber bags they all carried slung over their shoulders, and leave our friends with nothing but the tin box.

It was very aggravating to Jack.

Yet he could do nothing to stop them.

"Why don't Tim come down with the boat, I wonder?" he thought despairingly. "If we could only arm ourselves, we would have but little trouble to thwart them!"

In a few moments the boy saw the divers who had gone down in the ship's cabin come up with their bags filled with the gold, and stand guard while the rest went down to get a load of the money!

They, too, soon returned heavily laden, and to Jack's dismay he saw that between them they must have had a large percentage of the Spanish gold that fell from the safe!

They gathered in a group on the deck of the wreck for a few minutes, when one after another they jerked their life lines

signal to those on the Spider Crab to haul them up.

A moment afterwards their bodies began to ascend.

Jack and his friends remained staring blankly after them,

unable to do a thing to prevent the audacious robbery of the gold.

Luckily this state of affairs did not last long for the divers had not been gone but a moment, when to Jack's astonishment, he suddenly saw them dropping down again like rain.

One after another the seven came shooting toward the bottom in a veritable shower, landing upon the bed of the sea with such force that they lost their balance and fell prone.

"What under Heaven does this mean?" gasped the amazed boy.

He cast a second glance at the divers, and then the cause became apparent.

Their life lines were cut!

Hardly was this startling discovery made when the boy saw the Water Witch come sailing from above, with Tim out on the deck and a knife clutched in his hand.

He it was, doubtless, who cut the divers' life lines.

The old sailor had fastened the wheel after starting the boat slowly for the bottom, and the sea-motor was now guiding herself.

Glancing over the railing the old sailor saw the bottom only a short distance below, and then caught sight of his friends.

They waved their arms to him, and he responded similarly.

All the divers rushed off together, pointing up at the descending boat, and presently the sea-motor landed near Jack.

The boy and his friends hastened inside and armed themselves.

"We must attack them!" said Jack, when they opened their visors inside the boat. "If once they reach the steam yacht with that gold we will never see the color of it again."

"Ay, lad," said Tim, who followed them in. "That's ther plan. It's mighty lucky as I seen 'em while a-comin' down, or they'd a-got it. I sailed ther Water Witch off ther reef among thar lines, an' thar hung ther boat while I went out. Jest then I seen 'em a-comin' up, an' wot should I do but cut thar life lines an' drop 'em agin."

"Dey vhas axes und knives got," said Fritz, "und if ve near to dem blaces oursellufs, we got our hets proke, so ve better token bistols alretty und dry vot ve can do ter got beck dot goldt."

"Can't they ascend any other way, senores?" asked Cordova, nervously.

"Of course," replied Jack. "They can abandon their weights when their bodies will ascend, or their friends can pull them up by their air-tubes. Let us hasten——"

"Wait—I've got a plan!" said Tim. "It'll save a fight!"

"Name it," said Jack quickly.

"I'll stay in here an' you all go out on deck. I'll raise ther boats among thar air tubes, an' you kin bunch ther lot an' tie 'em to ther sea-motor so's they can't ascent."

Foreseeing that by this excellent plan they would have the divers completely at their mercy, Jack assented at once.

As soon as they were armed they went out on deck.

The divers were not near the boat, but at some distance off Jack saw their electric lanterns glowing through the mist of water like Will-o'-the-wisp.

Raising the boat a few yards, Tim drove her over to the divers, and when she ran in among their rope-like air tubes, he brought her to a pause and his friends gathered them in.

The divers soon discovered what was being done, and all became overwhelmed with the most intense alarm.

Having bunched the tubes and secured them with rope to the railing, Jack and his friends peered down at their enemies.

The divers were waving their hands to them.

A few moments afterward the tubes became taut above the boat.

It was evident that the crew of the steam yacht had been signaled to pull the divers up, and attempted to obey, but they found that it was impossible to do so.

The boy and his friends now seized their tubes, and by means of them hauled the divers up to the deck of the sea-motor.

Scarcely were the divers upon the deck, however, when one of them made a bolt for the place where the tubes were tied, to try and unfasten them, while the rest guarded his movement by attacking Jack and his friends with knives and axes.

Observing what they planned to do, our adventurers drew their pistols, which were pneumatic weapons of Jack's make, and aiming them at their enemies, brought them to a halt.

The man who was endeavoring to unfasten the air tubes kept on untying the knots, when Jack fired at him.

The ball struck the fellow, and he reeled and sank to the deck.

Upon seeing their companions wounded, the rest lost courage, for they knew that they could not successfully contend against such weapons, more especially as their air tubes only permitted them to go a few yards in any direction.

They were situated like chained dogs.

Jack and his friends now leveled their weapons at the divers, and a panic of fear overwhelming them, they flung down their weapons as a signal of surrender.

Down upon their knees they dropped, holding their hands over their heads in token of submission, and Jack and his friends approached and bound them hand and foot.

They had won the fight.

Their prisoners were taken into the boat and locked up while the gold was taken from their rubber bags.

It was well for the man whom Jack wounded that they surrendered, for water had been leaking through the bullet-hole in the rubber suit, and had they not submitted he would have been drowned.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FATAL SHOT.

The divers were divested of their suits, and the air tubes were loosened from the railing of the Water Witch, when our friends saw the empty armor hauled up by the crew of the Spider Crab.

What the latter individuals would think upon hauling the suits up minus their former inmates was a matter of speculation to Jack and his friends.

Fearing, however, lest other divers might descend, they lowered the sea-motor down beside the wrecked La Paloma.

Here Jack, Tim, and Cordova left the Water Witch, and going aboard of the wreck, provided with bags, they filled them with the gold pieces and carried them aboard their own craft.

Several trips were thus made, when all the gold was then secured, and a count of it proved that the sum was exactly the amount specified in the Spaniard's papers.

Their work was accomplished.

Nothing now remained to be done.

"We can go home now," said Jack, to his friends.

"Vell, ve vhas petter go oup by der surface vonct," said Fritz, "for I notice me dot der air in dis poat vhas gittin' stale."

"Blow me if ther Dutch swab ain't right," assented Tim. "We'd best get rid o' our prisoners, an' git home'ard bound."

Jack nodded, and started the pumps.

Out of the hold rushed the water, and the lightened boat began to soar up toward the surface of the sea.

She was but scarcely more than one hundred feet down to where the wreck lay, and soon reached the surface.

The sun was declining in the west, and half a mile away they saw the Spider Crab moving about under power.

A yell from her crew greeted the appearance of the sea motor, and she came flying rapidly toward the submarine boat, her crew swarming to the bulwarks armed to the teeth.

Noting their hostile appearance, Jack went out on deck, when every weapon was aimed at him by Crabb's men.

"Hold! don't fire, on your lives!" shouted the boy, warningly.

"We'll blow you to the deuce, by golly!" screamed Crabb.

"Fire one shot!" calmly answered the boy, "and the lives of your seven divers shall pay the forfeit."

"What! have you got them?" demanded Crabb, as Davy Jones brought the steam yacht to a pause fifty feet away.

"Every one is on board my boat, a prisoner."

"By golly! how did you get them?"

"It doesn't signify. I don't wish to go into details with you. Let it suffice that I've got all the gold and have won this game. I am willing to spare your men and return them to you upon certain conditions that I shall name."

"You've got the gold?"

"Every doubloon."

"Oh, Lord!"

"Do you want your divers?"

"By all means."

"Then my conditions are that you seek no further to molest us."

"Well?"

"And do not forget that Jack Wright never was defeated yet."

Crabb was about to make some fiery refusal to comply, when the rest of his crew crowded around him and began to abuse him for leading them on a wild goose chase.

They also demanded that he accede to Jack's terms and get their messmates back alive, or they'd mutiny.

Crabb was overwhelmed by this revulsion.

He expected they would abide by anything he said.

His ugly temper was rising, and he was just upon the point of defying his men when Davy Jones expostulated with him, and he finally cooled off and yelled:

"I'll agree!"

"Send a boat here with one man then," said Jack.

The only remaining quarter boat was lowered, and one of the Spider Crab's crew got in and pulled over to the Water Witch.

Fritz went below and marched the prisoners up on deck.

"Look out for treachery!" whispered Cordova. "You know what a sneak that man Crabb has been in the past."

"Oh, I'll keep my eye upon him," replied the boy, quietly.

He then turned to the prisoners, and telling them what had transpired he told them to embark in the boat, which by this time had reached the sea-motor.

They were glad enough to obey this order.

As soon as they were all aboard, and the rowboat was being pulled back toward the yacht, Jack shouted to Tim:

"Now, old fellow, come about and head for home!"

"Ay, ay, my hearty, and glad enough I am to do it too!" was the reply of the ancient mariner as he obeyed.

The sea-motor had scarcely started, however, when a volley of rifle shots was fired from behind the bulwarks of the steam yacht at the crew of the Water Witch.

There came a cry of pain from Cordova, and he fell.

"Por Dios, I'm shot!" he screamed.

"Treacherous hounds!" cried Jack, his dark eyes flashing fire.

He rushed over to Cordova, and saw that the unfortunate fellow had received a wound in the breast over the region of his heart, which was bound to prove fatal.

"Ach Gott!" groaned Fritz. "Dey vhas killed him! But fix dem for dot. Where's dot gun? Where's dot gun?"

While Jack was stanching the flow of blood from Cordova's wound, and trying to revive the Spaniard from a faint into

which he had fallen, the Dutch boy hauled the gun which Jack used to fire at the dugong out on deck.

He then loaded it with a long brass explosive cylinder, and taking precise aim at the Spider Crab, he discharged it.

With a shrill whistle the projectile flew over the water, and striking the side of the steam yacht, it penetrated.

The next moment there sounded a terrific explosion.

The entire side of the Spider Crab was blown out, and a chorus of wild cries pealed from her ruffianly crew.

She rapidly began to fill with water and settle down.

"In fife minutes she vill sink!" muttered Fritz.

"Hello! What have you done, Fritz?" asked the boy.

Fritz pointed at poor Cordova.

"Awenged dot man!" he replied sternly.

"The Spider Crab is sinking fast."

"Und so vhas Cordova."

The panic-stricken crew rallied on the yacht.

Orders flew thick and fast for a few moments.

Then the steam yacht was headed for the beach of the island, and was driven along under full pressure.

Fortunately the tide was high and a steam pump was operated, else the yacht would have sunk before reaching the island, and they drove her ashore.

She struck with a bang, and her machinery was stopped, when Jack saw her crew making shore cables fast to the trees.

The yacht was saved from foundering, but she was badly smashed by the shot, and so crippled that although the crew might repair her, it would be a long time before they could manage to get her afloat again.

A deep groan from Cordova's lips called Jack's attention back to the wounded man, and bending over the Spaniard's pale, ghastly face, as he opened his feverish eyes, Jack asked:

"Can I do anything for you?"

"No. I am afraid I am doomed."

"The ball seems to have pierced your lungs."

"Very true. I can feel that I am bleeding internally."

"By heavens! that was a cowardly shot."

"Was any one else hurt?"

"No one but you, Cordova."

"This pain is awful, Wright."

"I'll carry you into the cabin. Come here, Fritz, and help me."

They lifted up the groaning man and laid him in his berth. He suffered intensely for some time and finally gasped:

"Wright, come here, amigo mio!"

"Well—what now?" kindly asked the boy.

"I am dying——"

"Nonsense!"

"Ah, I know it."

"Cheer up, Cordova."

"It does not frighten me. I want to ask a favor."

"You may depend I'll do anything for you I can."

"I gave you my address in New York?"

"Yes—I have it written in my memorandum book."

"When I am gone, will you promise to go to my house on your return, and give my share of the gold to my wife and children? They are poor."

"I swear it, if the worst comes to you, Cordova."

"God bless you, Jack Wright! Now my mind is easier."

He fell into a lethargy after that, and remained so for over an hour, unconscious to everything about him.

Just as the moon arose over the heaving sea Cordova passed away.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

On the following day the Water Witch was many leagues away from the place where the La Paloma went down, and

after the body of the unfortunate Spaniard had been sewed up in a weighted sheet of canvas, it was consigned to a watery grave.

His eager zeal to amass a fortune had cost his life.

It cannot be said that Juan Cordova was exactly a bad man, for although in the beginning of his career with Jack he had proved himself to be tricky and avaricious, since that time he had always comported himself with politeness and decency, and seemed anxious to do his duty in every sense of the word.

Our three friends were heartily sorry to lose him.

"It is strange to me how Simeon Crabb knew where to come to look for the Paloma," said Jack on the following day. "When we left him coming down the coast of America he was only apprised of where the wreck was located on the Antipodes Island. But soon after we found him upon our trail miles away, with the persistence of a sleuth-hound, until we met him at the island near which the drifting wreck was discovered."

"Shiminey," answered Fritz, "I could oxblain me dot to you."

"You can? Why—how is that?"

"Vell, don't you vhas rememper vhen ve hat dem difers?"

"Distinctly. What of it?"

"I ask me dem how Grabb vhas apoud der blace where der wrecks vhas found oudt, und dey tell me all apoud id."

"Ah, I see. What did they say, Fritz?"

"Vhy, dey a ship met, near Antipodes Island, vot sighted der wreck near where ve seen id, und der gaptain he dells dot Taty Chones where to look for dot wrecks, so dey here dit come, und dot's how dem ve meted."

The mystery was clear enough to Jack now.

"After all their rascally trickery, their desperate efforts, and the expense Crabb went to, they gained nothing," said the boy.

"Ay, now," chimed in Tim, "did ye ever see a lubber do a wrong act yet but wot he wuz brung up inter ther wind fer it in trouble?"

There was a good deal of truth in this remark.

The boy then divided the gold into four equal parts, gave Tim and Fritz each \$125,000, took an equal amount for himself, and put aside the same sum for Cordova's widow.

He then forced open the tin box.

It contained some water-soaked, legal-looking documents, and when he dried them he found that they were the important papers wanted by the Spanish government in relation to the Colonial Bank affair of Cuba.

In payment of the return of these papers it must be remembered the Spanish government had offered to give the gold to the finder as a reward, which was originally meant to pay off the troops in Cuba during the rebellion there.

Having satisfied himself that the papers were all right, the boy made a parcel of them and locked them up.

"When we reach civilization again," he remarked to Tim, "I'll write an account of our adventures to the Spanish government and send them the papers with it."

"I don't tink it vhas likely as dot Grabb vill effer show ub again where ve can put him by der chail," said Fritz, "'cause vhen dey shooded Cordova I seen dot oldt son of a sea gooks lookin' at us with a glass. He seen dot he vhas kill dot Spanisher, und know dot it been easy as nodings dot ve can in brison put him for murder by der high seas alretty."

Judging by the amount of damage done to the hull of the steam yacht, it did not seem at all likely to Jack that his old enemy would leave the island in a hurry anyway.

"Put in jail fur murder on ther high seas!" contemptuously said Tim. "Great Lord, I reckon ye'd better l'arn more about ther law nor that. 'Tain't a State's prison offense—it means hangin' at ther yard-arm fer killin' a feller critter. I reckenlect when I wuz in ther navy——"

"Stob!" roared Fritz.

"I'll tell this story or bust!"

"Go on, den," said Fritz grimly.

He grabbed up his old accordeon, and began to play a furious tune to drown the old sailor's voice, but Tim kept on.

"One of my messmates," he continued, his solitary eye fuming on Fritz, and his voice raised to an angry roar, "one o' my messmates killed a man—wuz ketched——court-martial—hung."

"Whoop!" interposed Fritz, and Whiskers and Bismarck becoming excited by the tumult, added to the general uproar by screaming too.

Tim had come to a pause very complacently.

"Vhy don't yer go on?" yelled Fritz, playing with all his might.

Tim made no reply, but grimaced.

"Yer can'd," chuckled the Dutch boy. "You can't hear yer-self spoke alretty."

Still no reply from Tim, and Fritz stopped playing from sheer exhaustion, for his efforts had been most violent.

"He got the best of you that time, Tim," smiled Jack.

"Keel haul me if I see how," replied the old sailor, demurely.

"Why, he drowned you out so you couldn't tell your story."

"But I did tell it," blankly replied Tim.

"What! was that all there was of it that you told?"

"Ay!"

And a roar of laughter pealed from Tim, while over the faces of Jack and Fritz crept a sheepish expression sad to see.

The old sailor had the best of the joke on his side, and Fritz left the turret with an expression of supreme disgust.

The Water Witch made rapid progress across the Pacific, favored by good weather most of the way, and in due time she rounded Cape Horn, and went up the Atlantic coast of South America to the West Indies.

From there to New York was but three days' travel in the Gulf Stream, and she finally came to a pause at a dock, and Jack went ashore.

The boy carried Juan Cordova's share of the gold, and the valuable box of papers he had rescued from the wreck.

Furnished with the address of the Spaniard's widow, he called on the poor woman, and found her in abject poverty.

It was hard for the boy to break the news of her husband's death to her, but he did it, and when the first violent paroxysm of her grief subsided, he gave her all the particulars, and handed her Cordova's share of the money.

Despite her grief, she was sensible enough to appreciate how the fortune would keep her and her children from want, and with tears of gratitude streaming from her eyes, she thanked the boy over and over again for what he did for her.

Leaving the bereft woman, the young inventor then cabled the news of his recovery of the documents to the Spanish government, and stated that he would leave them in the care of the Spanish consul to be forwarded to Spain.

The boy received a reply while at the consulate thanking him for what he had done, and saying that the consul would care for the papers.

When he explained the matter to the representative of Spain, that gentleman was most profuse in his expression of gratitude, and gladly took care of the papers.

Having finally taken leave of the official, Jack returned aboard of his sea-motor, and joining his friends, he told them what he had done.

The singular sea-motor had drawn a crowd of curious spectators to the dock, and as the boy wished to avoid all notoriety, he started the Water Witch away.

She left the bay of New York and ran up the coast.

In due time the sea-motor arrived at Wrightstown, and crossing the bay ran up the creek to Jack's workshop.

There the journey ended.

The graceful vessel was then taken from the water and stored away for future use, and our friends found that everything at their home was going on as usual.

They soon settled down to their usual course, and the parrot and monkey returned to their old quarters.

Nothing was ever heard of Simeon Crabb, Davy Jones, or any of the rascally crew after that, and the boy was, therefore, led to believe that they settled in some other place if they ever left the lonely island on the Pacific.

Jack Wright's inventive genius soon asserted itself again, when he had settled in his beautiful home, and a most wonderful contrivance was planned out, to be built in the near future.

What this marvel was we cannot disclose to you at present; but when it was completed, he found a use for it, which entailed the development of adventures more wonderful and thrilling, if possible, than those he had passed through on his deep sea-motor.

A recital of them must be reserved for our next book, however, as want of space here compels us to reluctantly part from the boy and his two friends for a while and bring our narrative to a close.

THE END.

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